

TTD NEWS RELEASE

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Approval of Norwegian Air International Permit a Betrayal of U.S. Aviation Workers

Washington, DC – Edward Wytkind, president of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) issues this statement in response to the U.S. Department of Transportation's approval of a foreign air carrier permit for Norwegian Air International (NAI):

“Today’s decision betrays America’s aviation workers by granting a rogue, flag-of-convenience airline a permit to serve the United States. Unless reversed, this decision threatens a generation of U.S. airline jobs and tells foreign airlines that scour the globe for cheap labor and lax employment laws that America is open for business.

“On behalf of the nation’s several million transportation workers, and especially the men and women who form the backbone of U.S. aviation, I appeal to the President to reverse this decision by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

“NAI’s business model clearly and blatantly violates Article 17 *bis* of the 2010 U.S.-EU Open Skies Agreement, which states that the ‘opportunities created by the Agreement are not intended to undermine labor standards or the labor-related rights and principles contained in the Parties’ respective laws.’ Clearly, a Norwegian-owned airline that is based in Ireland for the purpose of evading Norway’s labor and tax laws, and that will hire crews under Asian contracts, is in violation of these explicit labor protections, and should be denied entry into our marketplace. With this decision, the Obama Administration has failed to enforce the very labor protection it negotiated and sold as a breakthrough in aviation trade policy.

“It is because of NAI’s blatant disregard for our trade laws that unions in the U.S. and Europe, major airlines, and Republican and Democratic members of Congress have all taken a strong stance against the airline’s application. Given the disgust with our trade policies expressed loudly by American voters on November 8, it is especially galling that the Administration has ignored the wants of the American people in favor of a rogue, foreign airline. We urge Congress to take whatever action is needed to undo this decision and prevent NAI and similar business models from poisoning the trans-Atlantic aviation market.

“Today’s decision effectively ushers in a new era in aviation, one in which high-road air carriers will be forced to compete with sweatshop-like airlines. Unless this decision is reversed, U.S. aviation workers will become the latest victims of perverse trade policy.”

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The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), provides a bold voice for workers in every mode of transportation and is devoted to protecting middle-class jobs, expanding

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