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Mr. John J. Degnan
Chairman
Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
225 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10003

Mr. Scott H. Rechler
Vice-Chairman
Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
225 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10003

November 18, 2014

Dear Chairman Degnan and Vice-Chairman Rechler:

We write today to urge you to continue moving forward with the existing major improvement projects at LaGuardia, JFK and Newark airports. In particular, the Port Authority should complete the longstanding RFP process to build a new Central Terminal Building at LaGuardia and choose a developer by your last Board meeting of 2014 on December 10th.

We are encouraged by Governor Cuomo's recent announcement of "redesign competitions" for LaGuardia and JFK, and agree that 21st Century airports are critical to the City and the region. But that process is only in the conceptual stage, and it must not put on hold the vital airport modernization projects that are already well underway.

First, the process to choose a developer for the public-private overhaul of the largest terminal at LaGuardia, the Central Terminal Building, began 3 years ago. As the Agency has made clear, the project is vital to the airport's ability to handle the expected passenger growth to 30 million passengers annually. Just as critically, the outdated, cramped existing terminal was opened in 1964 and stands as a proxy for LaGuardia's reputation as one of the worst airports in the country.

Building a 21st Century Central Terminal Building is the linchpin in changing that reputation.

The Agency narrowed down a shortlist of finalists to rebuild and operate the new terminal over a year ago. And the construction process will take a reported seven years from the date of financial closing. In short, it's time to come to a conclusion, choose a developer, and get the project started.

At Newark Airport, the agency announced a plan to create a one-seat ride for the state-of-the-art World Trade Center Transportation Hub directly to Newark Airport via the PATH, and we are encouraged that the Port's RFP for planning and management of the project continues. At 35 minutes, PATH to Newark Airport will be a fast and affordable option for millions of travelers. And it's a big step forward in 21st Century transportation that puts us on par with international airport competitors.

At JFK, the Agency has received bids to develop a first class hotel at the former TWA Flight Center, the Eero Saarinen-designed terminal that has become an icon of flying's golden age. The building has sat unused since 2001, and JFK has no on-airport hotel.

We know that on-airport hotels work. GGA recently issued a report demonstrating that hotels located on airport grounds have higher occupancy and room rates than off-site competitors, and that they can generate as much as a 12:1 ratio in dollars spent to overall economic activity for the regions in which the hotel operates.

An on-airport hotel can work for JFK as well, and the Port Authority should move forward as planned.

There are also a myriad of other important airport modernization projects in the Port Authority's pipeline, from the modernization of Terminal A at Newark to runway improvements to new amenities. Each of these has been through careful review and consultation with airlines and airport partners, and each needs to continue on the path to completion.

We have come too far and have too much at stake for our region and for the more than 112 million passengers who travel through Port Authority airports each year to allow anything to derail the progress that's being made toward creating 21st Century airports.

Thank you.

Joe Sitt

Chairman & Founder, Global Gateway Alliance
CEO, Thor Equities

Stuart Appelbaum

Vice President, Global Gateway Alliance
President, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union

Angelo Genova

Board Member, Global Gateway Alliance
Senior Partner, Genova Burns Giantomasi Webster

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Tom Wright

Board Member, Global Gateway Alliance
Executive Director & Incoming President, Regional
Plan Association

Kathryn Wylde

Board Member, Global Gateway Alliance
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Tim Zagat

Board Member, Global Gateway Alliance
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