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GGA: USE \$1 BILLION OF NEW FEDERAL SECURITY FEE INCREASE TO UPGRADE SECURITY EFFORTS AT NYC AREA AIRPORTS

New budget agreement directs two-thirds of airport security fees to general Federal debt reduction

(NEW YORK NEW JERSEY) – Global Gateway Alliance today criticized the recent Congressional budget agreement for allowing more than \$18 billion in Transportation Safety Administration Passenger Security charges to be siphoned off for general federal debt reduction, not additional security efforts at the largest airport system in the country. The GGA leaders called for the Obama Administration to dedicate \$1 billion from the increased fee toward upgrading security and adding TSA staffing.

“It’s common sense that new airport security fees should be used for security, not a Federal Government slush fund,” said GGA Chairman and founder Joe Sitt. “New York area airports have suffered from more than a decade of endless lines, security breaches, and even theft at the hands of the TSA. Now that we’re finally starting to get the technology and services we deserve the Administration needs to focus its resources on our airports more – not hit 110 million passengers here with higher costs and no new benefits.”

The Passenger Security Fee was established in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and the formation of the TSA to cover the costs of security operations, including technology, salaries and benefits for screeners, air marshals, and capital improvements. With the annual TSA budget reaching \$7.5 billion, the \$1.7 billion raised annually through the fee currently only covers approximately 25-30% of TSA operations.

The Federal budget agreement reached in late December raises the fee on every passenger – as much as more than doubling the one way fee from a \$2.50 to \$5.60, and generating a total of \$25.9 billion over ten years. However, rather than funding continued improvements in airport security and necessary screeners, the vast bulk of the revenue will be dedicated toward “debt reduction” in the Federal budget.

In August, the Board of GGA sent a letter to TSA Administrator Pistole calling for a number of upgrades to security operations at New York area airports. While some progress has been made on these measures, including providing Passenger Support Specialists to aid customers at TSA lines and adding Pre-Check lanes, the addition of \$1 billion over ten years from the increased fee could fund much of the remaining improvements including:

- 1) **Investing in vastly upgraded mobile application technology to provide accurate real-time information to passengers** about security line wait times at each terminal for JFK, LaGuardia and Newark. The current “My TSA” app relies exclusively on passengers voluntarily and randomly submitting their experiences on wait times. In fact, the disclaimer when registering for the App states that that TSA makes “no claims about accuracy, completeness or adequacy of the contents of My TSA.
- 2) **Upgrading screening technology with tools such as biometric screening**, and ensuring these new measures are implemented at New York area airports first.
- 3) **Adding TSA screeners and agents** at area airports to meet the demand of the largest airport system in the country, helping relieve long security lines and ensure greater safety.
- 4) **Developing and funding a distinct customer service training program** for New York area airports to help agents implement a consistent customer focused approach tailored to the uniquely fast paced environment at these airports.
- 5) **Bringing pre-check lanes and enrollment centers** to each of the major terminals at New York area airports to speed up security lines and pre-screen more passengers.

ABOUT GGA

Global Gateway Alliance (GGA), was established to address the major challenges facing the metropolitan region's airports and related infrastructure that, if left unaddressed, will serve as a major impediment to the long-term growth of New York City and surrounding areas. By harnessing the expertise of leaders in business, government, academia, labor and other sectors, we seek to tackle these challenges head-on and serve as the leading advocate in an effort to improve our airports and facilitate the continued growth of the region. For more information regarding the Global Gateway Alliance, please visit www.globalgatewayalliance.org. Follow GGA on Twitter @GGA_NYNJ and 'Like' the organization on Facebook at <http://on.fb.me/UsqxGw>.

GGA's board of directors includes: **Joe Sitt** (Chairman), CEO, Thor Equities; **Stuart Appelbaum**, President of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union; **Chris Giamo**, Regional President for TD Bank; **Dan Glickman** former Congressman and U.S. Agriculture Secretary; **David Hopkins**, Senior Director of Aviation at the New York City Economic Development Corporation; **Jared Kushner**, Owner of Kushner Properties and the New York Observer; **George Miranda**, Teamsters' International Vice President; **Mitchell Moss**, Henry Hart Rice Professor of Urban Policy and Planning at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University; **William Rudin**, CEO of Rudin Management Company, Inc. and Chairman of ABNY; **Joseph Spinnato**, President of the Hotel Association of New York City; **Alvin S. Trenk**, Chairman and CEO of Air Pegasus Corp; **Peter Ward**, President of the Hotel Trades Council on New York; **Kathryn Wylde**, President of the Partnership for New York City, and **Tim Zagat**, Co-Founder and Co-Chair of Zagat Survey.

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