

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 21, 2018

The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretaries Pompeo and Chao:

For years, the governments of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have provided subsidies to their state-owned airlines at the expense of U.S. aviation workers and jobs in this country. More than 300 Members of Congress have expressed concern on behalf of U.S. aviation employees in their states, urging you to address state subsidies and unfair competition in international aviation and to enforce our bilateral aviation trade agreements with these countries.

Earlier this year, the Administration finally intervened by negotiating new memoranda of understanding with Qatar and the UAE that— if adhered to— would provide greater financial transparency into the subsidies Qatar and the UAE’s state-owned airlines receive. As you know, as part of these understandings, Qatar and the UAE also agreed to take steps to ensure that their airlines would operate on commercial terms. Most importantly, it is our understanding that Qatar and the UAE agreed not to introduce any new “Fifth Freedom” flights to the United States by their state-owned carriers until those carriers were operating on commercial terms.

As we approach the one-year anniversary of the signing of the U.S.-Qatar understanding, we are writing to request an update on how the Administration will ensure that both agreements are effectively enforced. We have reason for concern, as it appears that Qatar’s state-owned airline, Qatar Airways, is already violating the spirit of the U.S.-Qatar understanding through its recent investment in a failing EU airline called Meridiana, which was renamed Air Italy, and is now offering service to the United States.

Further, it remains unclear whether Qatar and the UAE plan to uphold their commitments to increased financial transparency. Qatar Airway’s fiscal year 2018 disclosures, for example, appear to be *less* transparent than in past years, as they omit details needed to quantify subsidies from known transactions.

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We respectfully request a briefing from your Departments to explain how the Administration will ensure the effective enforcement of these important agreements. The livelihoods of thousands of American aviation workers depends on strict enforcement by your Departments and we hope to partner with you in that endeavor. We look forward to hearing from you in the coming weeks and to working with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,



PETER DeFAZIO  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation  
and Infrastructure



ELIOT ENGEL  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Foreign Affairs



RICK LARSEN  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Aviation