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SOUTHWEST AIRLINES PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

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SWAPA Opposes DOT Approval of Norwegian Foreign Air Carrier Permit

Pilots of Southwest Airlines call for reversal of decision

DALLAS - The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) tentative approval to grant Norwegian Air International (NAI) a foreign air carrier permit sets a dangerous precedent in aviation and demonstrates the administration's unwillingness to ensure a level playing field for American workers when executing trade agreements. The Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association (SWAPA) strongly opposes this decision.

"Norwegian Air International will possess an unparalleled advantage over U.S. carriers if it is allowed to proceed with its Flag of Convenience scheme," said Captain Jon Weaks, SWAPA President. "This tentative decision highlights the need for a review of U.S. international aviation policy to ensure that policies are not detrimental to U.S. carriers. If finalized, this deal will harm U.S. Carriers and the thousands of aviation workers who operate and support the nation's international flights."

Norwegian Air Shuttle (NAS), NAI's parent company, currently flies to the U.S. using Norwegian crews, operating under Norway's labor and social laws. NAS could expand its current operation to meet its growth plans but instead chooses to evade Norwegian labor and social laws and establish an Irish-based subsidiary. This scheme is in direct violation of article 17 of the U.S.-EU Open Skies agreement.

"To approve NAI's request based solely on Article 4 and allow them to commence operations, knowing they would immediately be in violation of the agreement, is absurd," continued Captain Weaks. "SWAPA is committed to protecting the careers of SWAPA pilots and will oppose any trade agreement that places U.S. workers at a disadvantage to foreign competitors. I urge the administration to reconsider this tentative approval and prove that it is willing to enforce trade agreements and protect U.S. workers."

Finally, Captain Weaks noted that "the NAI subsidiary and its use of contract workers hired by a foreign staffing agency also poses potential serious safety risks. Crewmembers working

under employment contracts with no direct line of communication to airline management often lack the ability to highlight potential safety or operational issues. Clear and open communication between frontline operators and airline management is critical to running a safe and efficient airline.”

SWAPA urges the DOT to reverse its tentative decision and preserve a fair and level playing field for U.S. workers by denying NAI a Foreign Carrier Permit.

Located in Dallas, Texas, the Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association (SWAPA) is a non-profit employee organization representing the more than 8,000 pilots of Southwest Airlines. SWAPA works to provide a secure and rewarding career for Southwest pilots and their families through negotiating contracts, defending contractual rights and actively promoting professionalism and safety. For more information on the Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association, visit www.swapa.org or Twitter @swapapilots.

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