



— State of —  
**North Dakota**  
*Office of the Governor*

**Doug Burgum**  
*Governor*

December 28, 2017

The Honorable Rex Tillerson  
United States Secretary of State  
2201 C St., NW  
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
United States Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: OPEN SKIES

Dear Secretary Tillerson and Secretary Chao:

I join a number of my fellow governors in voicing my concern that the massive and illegal subsidies Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are providing to their state-owned airlines pose a serious threat to the U.S. aviation industry and American jobs.

These subsidies allow the three state-owned Gulf carriers – Qatar Airways, Etihad Airways, and Emirates Airlines – to dramatically increase their carrying capacity while artificially lowering prices. These changes are forcing honest and fair-market U.S. carriers to abandon international routes and put U.S. aviation jobs and our national security at risk.

Since 2004, Qatar Airways, Etihad Airways, and Emirates Airlines have received over \$50 billion in illegal government subsidies and other benefits from Qatar and the UAE, in direct violation of the rules negotiated by the United States with these nations in the Open Skies agreements. These unfair government subsidies make it impossible for US. carriers to compete for international routes because of the massive market distortions that they create. Experts estimate that for every international roundtrip flight dropped by a US. airline, over 1,500 American jobs are lost.

North Dakota is home to four international airports including Hector International Airport in Fargo, Grand Forks International Airport, Minot International Airport and Sloulin Field International

Airport in Williston. In addition, Bismarck Municipal Airport and the Dickinson Theodore Roosevelt Regional Airport also provide commercial service to the region. National and international carriers service North Dakota through these airports, creating jobs and supporting local businesses that are critical to our state's economy. Since the birth of aviation, we have and continue to welcome international carriers and the travelers they bring to North Dakota, but international carriers must play by the same rules as U.S. carriers and compete fairly and legally in an open and even marketplace.

While I support the US. Open Skies program and welcome international carriers and passengers to North Dakota, I believe all airlines must be able to compete for business and passengers on a level playing field. The United States entered into the Open Skies agreements to ensure that US. airlines would receive fair and equal treatment. I urge you to take meaningful action to enforce these agreements and restore a level playing field for our US. international carriers. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Doug Burgum". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Doug Burgum  
Governor of North Dakota