

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

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Airline Ticket Pricing

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House Transportation Committee  
Subcommittee on Aviation

Room 205  
Ryan Office Building  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Monday, February 26, 2001 - 1:08 p.m.

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BEFORE:

Honorable Russ Fairchild, Majority Subcommittee Chairman on  
Aviation  
Honorable John Pippy, Majority Secretary  
Honorable Dick Hess, Majority Subcommittee Chairman on  
Transportation Safety  
Honorable Dennis Leh, Majority Subcommittee Chairman on  
Highways  
Honorable Ron Marsico, Majority Subcommittee Chairman on  
Railroads  
Honorable Ellen Bard  
Honorable Kate Harper  
Honorable Gene McGill  
Honorable Stephen Stetler, Minority Secretary  
Honorable Joseph Petrarca, Minority Subcommittee Chairman  
on Aviation

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**BEFORE (cont'd.):**

**Honorable LeAnna Washington, Minority Subcommittee Chairman  
on Public Transportation**

**Honorable David Levdansky, Minority Subcommittee Chairman  
on Railroads**

**Honorable Susan Laughlin**

**\*\*\***

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**ALSO PRESENT:**

**Eric Bugaile**  
Majority Executive Director  
House Transportation Committee

**Dana J. Alwine**  
Majority Counsel

**Paul Parsells**  
Minority Executive Director  
House Transportation Committee

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1                   CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Good afternoon, ladies  
2 and gentlemen. My name is Representative Russ Fairchild.  
3 And I'm the Majority Subcommittee Chairman on Aviation.  
4 And to my right is Representative Petrarca, who is the  
5 Minority Subcommittee Chairman on Aviation.

6                   It's a pleasure to welcome you here today.  
7 Today's hearings are a result of what I feel is an awful  
8 lot of questions from constituents, business people, and  
9 the flying public over the years. And what we hope to do  
10 and what I've asked the testifiers to do is to lay out the  
11 problem and offer solutions for, if they perceive that  
12 there are solutions available, to offer those in their  
13 testimony today.

14                   These are about the, the rates not only in  
15 Pennsylvania but for flights that originate here and have  
16 outside-the-state destinations. With that said, we have a  
17 busy list of testifiers today, and we're going to get right  
18 to the business of the Committee.

19                   And the first testifier is Fred Testa, Junior,  
20 who is an aviation consultant. And Fred is going to  
21 hopefully lay out a series of dialogue on the problem at  
22 hand and basically where we are in Pennsylvania today.  
23 With that said, Fred, you may begin when you're ready.

24                   MR. TESTA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.  
25 Chairman, Committee members, Representative Petrarca, my

1 testimony today is to give you an overview, sort of a  
2 primer on the airfares or air rates and what goes into  
3 making them what they are.

4           The US DOT recently released three reports  
5 having to do with airfares in the country and the airline  
6 practices. And these are the three reports. I haven't  
7 copied them for you because there's a little over 200 pages  
8 here. But I'm going to give these to Representative  
9 Fairchild's secretary.

10           And if any one of you would like to read  
11 those, they'll be available through his secretary's office.  
12 I'll go into them briefly. Or you can get them off the web  
13 on the US DOT site and then download them or print them as  
14 you see fit.

15           The three reports are findings and conclusions  
16 on economic policy legal issues, which is an enforcement  
17 policy DOT has proposed to enforce certain nonpredatory  
18 practices by airlines.

19           The second one is dominated hub fares. And  
20 I'm sure you've read about that in the newspapers. And it  
21 talks about certain hubs in the country, dominated hubs,  
22 meaning that a substantial portion of their air traffic is  
23 controlled by a single airline, and what the premiums are  
24 that people pay flying out of those hubs.

25           And the third one is predatory practices in

1 the US airline industry. That was done by a couple of  
2 college professors and looked at predatory practices since  
3 1995 or '96 or so and uses some data gathered.

4           On the enforcement findings, on the first  
5 one -- and I'll try to sum these up as briefly as I  
6 could -- "This administration has concluded that incumbent  
7 airlines at times have responded to new competition with  
8 fare cuts, capacity increases, and other practices that are  
9 apparently designed to eliminate or reduce competition. An  
10 airline's success in eliminating or reducing competition  
11 will harm the public by denying travelers the lower fares  
12 and better service created through competition."

13           And this particular report also goes into a  
14 policy on how to cure that or at least some enforcement  
15 that they feel DOT has enforcement rights on. To be fair,  
16 since we're in Pennsylvania and the dominant airline, to be  
17 honest, is US Airways here in Pennsylvania, the most  
18 examples in this report do not refer to US Airways.

19           It's mostly to do with Northwest predatory  
20 practices and protecting its Detroit and Minneapolis hubs  
21 and some Atlanta Delta practices when AirTran went in with  
22 low fare service and tried to compete with Delta. In fact,  
23 many of the low fare carriers that are cited in some of  
24 these -- to be fair now, I'm trying to present both  
25 sides -- who went out of business or are continuing to

1 struggle have entered the business terribly underfunded  
2 using a few older aircraft and have generally performed in  
3 ways not conducive to continued operation.

4           And I won't mention names. But there are  
5 several airlines that really have raised 3 to \$5 million,  
6 tried to start service with three aircraft and run those  
7 three aircraft 20 hours a day trying to create service  
8 between heavily populated areas. They haven't succeeded.

9           That's not to say low cost carriers haven't  
10 succeeded because they have. Southwest is a prime example  
11 followed by AirTran, which is the revamped, renewed Value  
12 Jet under new management with new aircraft in a whole new  
13 philosophy and doing extremely well, by the way.

14           And the new style of carrier, JetBlue, which  
15 actually had more money in the bank than most anybody else,  
16 they're \$130 million in the bag before they even started.  
17 Those very well-financed carriers are doing very well with  
18 new aircraft enjoying the fruits of better fuel efficiency  
19 and enough money in the bank to withstand pressures.

20           Some of the smaller carriers that go on one or  
21 two flights a day really have a hard time fighting against  
22 a carrier that comes in with 20 or 30 or has 40 flights a  
23 day from that same hub to the same destination because it  
24 just cannot compete.

25           That's why Southwest when it goes into a new



1 city goes in with a minimum of 15 flights a day, mostly 17  
2 flights a day and builds up their services very, very  
3 rapidly so it can withstand the pressures of any dominant  
4 carrier in the market.

5           On the second report, dominated hub fares,  
6 this is the one you have seen. And attached to my  
7 testimony, by the way, are several articles. One has to do  
8 with Philadelphia's airfares being 30 percent higher than  
9 the average. And this report is the one that uses fares  
10 out of hub cities as opposed to fares out of other hub  
11 cities that have low fare competition.

12           And in dominated hubs as a whole, 24.7 million  
13 passengers pay on average 41 percent more than do their  
14 counterparts flying in hub markets with low fare  
15 competition. These are the four conclusions in the report.  
16 Passengers in short haul hub markets without a low fare  
17 carrier pay even higher fares or 54 percent more.

18           Charlotte, Cincinnati, Minneapolis, and  
19 Pittsburgh have the highest overall fare differentials.  
20 Those are the four hubs they have cited for the premium hub  
21 fare differentials. And the four rationales used by the  
22 major airlines commonly used to explain away high fares in  
23 hub markets - passenger mix, operational cost, quality of  
24 service, and the Southwest Effect - only apply if price  
25 competition is not present.

1           These are the four conclusions. Again, these  
2 have a lot more detail in them. But I won't bore you with  
3 the detail. What I've done is put together some  
4 information for you. Aggregate fares in the 19 large short  
5 haul markets that gained and kept low fare service since  
6 1997. These are the 19 large markets that gained Southwest  
7 or AirTran and have held onto them since 1997.

8           The average -- now, they split it down to  
9 three categories: Between 250 miles, which is really short  
10 haul; 250 to 500 miles, which is the medium haul service;  
11 and then long haul, 500 to 750 miles. Average fare before  
12 entry was \$177, 156, and 213.

13           After the entry by low cost carriers, those  
14 fares dropped to 79, 96, and 143. All carriers' airfares  
15 now. We're not just talking the low cost carrier. And the  
16 change in passengers, 86 percent increase under 250, 65 and  
17 61. And the average change in fares in the minus category.

18           I've worked at two of those airports that have  
19 this kind of dramatic increase. One, Providence, before  
20 Southwest entry was dominated -- not dominated. It was an  
21 O and D market, but it primarily was served by US Airways.  
22 And when Southwest came to Providence, it dramatically  
23 increased from 2 1/2 million to 3 million passengers a year  
24 to over 5 million passengers a year. I was Deputy there.

25           And when I was Director in Manchester, when

1 Southwest came in plus other carriers also, that went from  
2 an airport with 700,000 passengers a year to last year's  
3 3.2 million passengers a year. Manchester I'm very closely  
4 familiar with. It went from one of the ten most expensive  
5 airports to fly out of to one of the ten cheapest in the  
6 country to fly out of.

7           The predatory practices study, that's this one  
8 done by the two profs. This one I have a little bit of  
9 problem with. It's very interesting reading. And it talks  
10 about predatory practices mostly of the airlines I've  
11 already mentioned.

12           But this study is one which purports to show  
13 the fare premiums paid at dominated hubs that have no low  
14 fare competition. Some of the data in this report is three  
15 years old. And it has rapidly been changing in  
16 Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

17           Both of those airports' fares have come down  
18 since the AirTran, especially in Philadelphia which is  
19 really not a heavily dominated airport, and Pittsburgh  
20 since the introduction of AirTran there for eight flights a  
21 day.

22           One theme is common through all of these  
23 reports and every other report you ever see in an airport  
24 produce. And that is, it's really axiomatic. When there  
25 is competition, fares fall. Where there is no competition,

1 fares stay relatively high. It's the old capital theory of  
2 fare and demand. It works extremely well at airports.

3           Now I want to talk about -- most of the things  
4 I'm going to show you now are nationwide kinds of figures.  
5 But you have to understand this when I talk about the  
6 dominated hubs of Philly and Pittsburgh, especially in that  
7 Pennsylvania is a dominated state and with most of the  
8 service and most of the passengers going on US Airways.

9           Operating margins, which is a real telltale  
10 story of profitability of an airline. As you see, last  
11 quarter ending '99, last quarter ending 2000. Southwest  
12 has the best operating margin, and the worst has been US  
13 Airways in both instances.

14           You have Delta, Continental, American,  
15 Northwest, and United. I've left out things like Alaska  
16 and America West because they don't really come into the  
17 East Coast at all. And I am -- as you can see, the  
18 operating margins tell a story of profitability.

19           What goes into profitability? I'm going  
20 to -- again, there's some articles at the end of my  
21 testimony that I've copied, downloaded that explain the  
22 terms. But cost per available seat mile means how much  
23 does it cost to put that seat, whether it's full or empty,  
24 up in the air for one mile. No matter which, it's an  
25 average cost overall for the whole country.

1           Revenue per available seat mile is when you  
2 take the revenue from that plane that day or all the planes  
3 that time, how much revenue per available seat mile. Now,  
4 as you notice, US Air was, has the most expensive cost in  
5 the industry, also has the highest revenue per available  
6 seat mile.

7           However, it doesn't tell the whole story  
8 because yield is a very important picture factor. That  
9 yield is really referred to as revenue passenger miles or  
10 the actual number of seat miles flown. Even though the  
11 available seat mile revenue may have so many seats per  
12 available seat mile revenue, don't forget all those seats  
13 are not full.

14           How much are they actually getting per actual  
15 seat really flown? And that's the yield figure. Again, US  
16 Air has the highest yield of all the airlines. But again,  
17 none of these factors tell the true picture. I'll try to  
18 explain to you why.

19           Break-even points. If you look at the -- now,  
20 follow me here. I'm going to use the 146-seat aircraft  
21 times the cost per available seat mile, which means how  
22 much does it cost me to get that 146-seat aircraft up in  
23 the air each mile that it goes along?

24           You take their cost per available seat mile  
25 and multiply it by 146. You get the cost per aircraft mile

1 for this 146-seat aircraft. By the way, this works for all  
2 number aircraft. I tried it with 95 seats and 180 seats.  
3 It works. So I just chose 146 seats, which is a 737. Four  
4 hundred seating capacity or 300. I forget which one.

5           So you've got the cost per aircraft mile,  
6 \$18.47. And the revenues, in order to get a revenue just  
7 above the break-even point means that the break-even load  
8 factor for US Airways has to be 80 percent. Its costs are  
9 so high and its yields, although high, it has to break even  
10 at 80 percent load factor, which means 80 percent of its  
11 seats have to be filled.

12           Southwest, on the other hand, only has to fill  
13 60 percent of its seats because of its low costs, high  
14 revenue, good yield factor, and only has to fill 60  
15 percent. Now, these numbers are based only on seats for  
16 passengers. Every airline makes money in other ways.

17           It carries cargo, and it carries US mail. But  
18 I don't know those numbers, and you can't find out those  
19 numbers. So we have to base it upon the actual fares  
20 spent. These are all 1995 fares and costs.

21           In comparing the hubs, we'll take Atlanta and  
22 Cincinnati, which are Delta hubs. And the percentage  
23 figure there is a domination of that airline at that hub.  
24 So in Atlanta, the Delta has 62 percent of the passenger  
25 traffic. And its average fare, not the airport's average

1 fare, its average fare is \$178 over a distance averaging  
2 748, which means that its actual fare per mile out of its  
3 dominated hub is 23.8 cents.

4 Out of Cincinnati, which is even more  
5 dominated with 74 percent, its actual fare is 27.3 cents a  
6 mile. Continental at Newark and Cleveland, you see 54 and  
7 44 percent. Its fares are 18.6 and 22.1 cents per mile.  
8 Denver and Dulles, two United hubs, 21 and 18 cents a mile.

9 And the three US Air hubs, Charlotte, Pitt and  
10 Philly, Philadelphia, have fares per seat mile 32.8 cents  
11 at Charlotte; Pittsburgh at 28.6 cents per mile; and  
12 Philadelphia, 24.8 cents a mile. And there's a reason to  
13 this. Philadelphia is not a heavily dominated hub.

14 Only 51 percent of the actual traffic belongs  
15 to US Airways. It has lots of competition at the airport  
16 as compared to Pittsburgh at 69 percent and Charlotte at 69  
17 percent. It has, Philadelphia has several low fare  
18 carriers such as ATA; American TransAir, which has limited  
19 service. AirTran, which is the old Value Jet, is now going  
20 to Philadelphia.

21 I think it has eight or nine flights a day.  
22 And it's just going to Pittsburgh also with eight flights a  
23 day. And it also has other small carriers like Van -- not  
24 Vanguard -- Spirit and some of the others. And that  
25 explains the fare differential.

1           There's also other factors in here. And the  
2 cost for each airport, that's cost per enplaned passenger.  
3 I haven't put those up because they don't seem to correlate  
4 in any way, shape, or form with the cost of the ticket out  
5 of that airport.

6           Charlotte's probably one of the lowest cost  
7 airports to work out of. I think its cost per enplaned  
8 passenger is around \$3 a head, while the cost in Pittsburgh  
9 is somewhere around 8 or \$9 per enplaned passenger. Now,  
10 in comparison with those fares you just saw, I've picked  
11 two low fare hub airports; and they're both Southwest.

12           One is Baltimore-Washington International.  
13 And Southwest has 30 percent of the traffic, and US Air has  
14 28 percent of the traffic. The average fares in 1999 are  
15 96 and 133 in the left you can see. And the fare miles,  
16 Southwest put its fares out at 11.6 cents a mile, while US  
17 Air put its fares out at 17.7 cents a mile.

18           So US Air did lower its fares in a lower cost  
19 hub down to 17.7 cents a mile as opposed to the hub fares  
20 you just saw. And in Providence where Southwest has now 31  
21 percent of the market and US Air with 28 percent, see the  
22 average fare, 102, 148. Same thing, 10 1/2 cents a mile,  
23 17 cents a mile.

24           I have a data list that's about several  
25 hundred pages of fares between city pairs. But again,



1 trying to put together a list to show you the airfare  
2 differences and keep my testimony within certain reasonable  
3 bounds, I've picked some city pairs to show you some of the  
4 differences.

5           If you look at Baltimore-Washington  
6 International to Atlanta -- now, this is a Delta service.  
7 This is not US Airway -- fare distance is 576 miles, \$340  
8 at Baltimore. While at Harrisburg -- that MDT, by the way,  
9 is Harrisburg's three call letters -- it's \$430.

10           Now, that's not US Air. But it's just to show  
11 you that when low cost service goes into an airport,  
12 generally all fares decline even if that carrier does not  
13 service it. Southwest does not serve Atlanta, only Delta  
14 does in these two markets. So you see the difference.

15           I've picked a 4-city pair here because it's a  
16 good indication of you looking area-wise. If I'm trying to  
17 go from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh or at least from that area  
18 of the state to the western end of the state and maybe even  
19 the eastern part of, the extreme eastern part of Ohio,  
20 Harrisburg to Cleveland is 280 miles. It's \$541.

21           By the way, these are actual average fares  
22 paid in 1999. All the revenues divided by all the  
23 passengers, fare-paying passengers. Nonfares and nonrevs  
24 have been excluded. Now, Harrisburg to Pittsburgh, 185  
25 miles because it's closer than Cleveland. It's a \$380

1 fare, the average airfare.

2           BWI to Pittsburgh, 210 miles. \$450 was the  
3 average fare paid. But if you went to Baltimore, which is  
4 only an hour from Harrisburg, and you flew to Cleveland,  
5 which is what, an hour and something west of Pittsburgh,  
6 the fare was \$127. So if you were in the area going to do  
7 business or pleasure or leisure, the move is to go out of  
8 state.

9           Another is Boston. Now, if you're flying from  
10 Harrisburg to Boston, 335 miles. The fare was \$442,  
11 average fare. BWI to Boston, on the other hand, was \$292.  
12 But if you worked your magic and looked at the area fares  
13 and you went to Baltimore and flew to Providence or  
14 Manchester -- now, both of those airports are only 50 miles  
15 from Boston.

16           If you were going north of the city or in that  
17 area, that's Manchester. If you were going south of the  
18 area, that would be Providence. The fare dropped to \$116,  
19 actual fare paid. Pittsburgh to Boston, \$390. Now, Erie  
20 to Boston is \$450.

21           And I put that up because that would be  
22 expected. I mean, Erie would have to stop in Pittsburgh  
23 and then go on to Boston. What isn't explainable and I  
24 just put it up here was the BWI to Pittsburgh is \$450, same  
25 fare as up here. However, Erie to Baltimore is \$211. That

1 was the actual fares paid in 1999.

2           Now, I've used average fares here. And  
3 averages you have to be careful with because in any  
4 competitive response to an air carrier dropping its fares,  
5 most carriers match fares. So if a carrier comes in or  
6 offers a low fare, you'll find competitive low fares, even  
7 out of Harrisburg. And you'll be hearing from its  
8 chairman.

9           And you'll find that the fares to Orlando are  
10 pretty much in line with flying out of Baltimore, even  
11 flying out of Harrisburg pretty much. But we don't know  
12 exactly how many seats on that aircraft are low fare  
13 because this bucket we call in the aviation industry  
14 contains all of the seats on that aircraft at all of the  
15 fares.

16           Now, those fares may range from the matching  
17 fare of \$103 or \$105 one way to a higher 4- or \$500 and  
18 give you this average. However, there may only be two or  
19 three or four seats of the low cost variety on one  
20 aircraft; and the other aircraft may have 60 low cost  
21 seats. So we can't tell that; therefore, have to use the  
22 averages.

23           And that's my overview. And you'll be hearing  
24 more specific details from the airports that will be  
25 testifying and the airlines that will be testifying before

1 you today. But if you have any questions, I'll be glad to  
2 answer them.

3 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you.

4 MR. TESTA: Oh, excuse me. I'm not quite  
5 finished. Excuse me. I had Dana get me some data. As an  
6 exercise, I had the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission give  
7 us figures on how many cars enter Philadelphia to  
8 Harrisburg, Harrisburg to Philadelphia. And that's almost  
9 3 million vehicles a year.

10 Pittsburgh to Harrisburg and Harrisburg to  
11 Pittsburgh there are almost 600,000 vehicles a year making  
12 that trek. That's quite a haul, four hours or so.  
13 Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh to Philadelphia, a  
14 little less. There's about 250,000 vehicles a year.

15 I have those figures and can give them to you.  
16 But I wanted an indication of how many people were driving  
17 that distance on the pike as opposed to flying, which is  
18 far easier. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. Excuse me for  
19 interrupting you.

20 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you. On your  
21 chart of the sample average fares, I think just about the  
22 last one, if I understand that correctly -- and I realize  
23 these are average and it was 1999 when these were  
24 taken -- but if I understand that correctly, if I lived in  
25 Harrisburg and I wanted to go to Pittsburgh, I would have

1 basically two choices.

2 One would be to fly -- or I'm sorry. To  
3 Cleveland. To Cleveland. One, I could fly from Harrisburg  
4 to Cleveland and pay \$541; or I could drive an hour and a  
5 half to BWI, Baltimore-Washington, and fly for \$127.

6 MR. TESTA: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: That's about a \$414,  
8 if I did my math correctly, difference --

9 MR. TESTA: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: -- for --

11 MR. TESTA: There are a lot more examples.

12 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: -- for more air miles.

13 I mean, you're flying a longer distance. Okay.

14 MR. TESTA: Usually, flying a longer distance  
15 does give you a lower per seat average, average-wise across  
16 the country because it, it's more efficiency rather than up  
17 and down, up and down, up and down with long taxi times and  
18 stuff like that.

19 But yeah, you're right. That's the difference  
20 in fares. And the same way with trying to go to Boston.

21 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: That brings me back to  
22 kind of my second question. On the chart that shows the  
23 aggregate fares in 19 large short haul markets --

24 MR. TESTA: Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: -- since 1997, that

1 first line, that's average fare before entry.

2 MR. TESTA: Of a low cost carrier.

3 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Yes. I mean, it seems  
4 to me like -- I don't want to say a targeted market. But  
5 it seems to be that less than 250 miles they seem to pay a,  
6 the higher rates. Is that pretty true in the industry?

7 MR. TESTA: That's pretty true in the  
8 industry.

9 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: So could the  
10 conclusion be made that those short rates are consistently  
11 the most expensive but also suffer from probably the least  
12 competition? Is that a fair statement?

13 MR. TESTA: It's a fair statement.

14 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: And the last  
15 question -- and then I'm going to put it out to the other  
16 members -- is from a broad perspective, what do you see as  
17 far as recommendations that Pennsylvania could do to  
18 enhance the, make the fares better for flying in  
19 Pennsylvania?

20 MR. TESTA: Actually, there are some airports  
21 with very low levels of service that are very small and  
22 probably could not fiscally support more frequency or a  
23 larger aircraft which are more efficient in flying. So for  
24 those airports, there's probably not much.

25 It's just the convenience of supplying a small

1 aircraft that will get you to a hub such as Pittsburgh or  
2 Newark or Philly or Cleveland. And that convenience of  
3 flying close to home costs you some money. For those  
4 markets in Pennsylvania -- and there are several of  
5 them -- that are big enough to support, I think, better  
6 service, it is up to the airports. With, I think, the  
7 state's help, they can go out and market their wares.

8           It's a very extremely -- this is going to be a  
9 long-winded answer. Airlines used to have very good  
10 planning departments at one time. And lately, in the '80s  
11 and early '90s, they just got rid of them all. So they  
12 really knew marketing and markets pretty well before they  
13 put aircraft in.

14           It's up to the airports now to convince  
15 airlines of every strike, whether it be a major carrier or  
16 a low cost carrier, why my market has the ability to  
17 support better service. Or lower your fares, and we'll put  
18 more people on aircraft. And that way your yield per  
19 aircraft will go up.

20           And that is really beyond the ability of some  
21 of the medium-sized airports in the state, Wilkes-Barre,  
22 Harrisburg. Probably money available to do marketing and  
23 to do some real in-depth statistical research on  
24 marketplaces and what they produce, incomes and things like  
25 that.

1           And what I'm doing, I'm giving you the formula  
2 I used at Manchester, which is a city of 100,000 people  
3 stuck in New Hampshire where not, most people don't believe  
4 anybody lives except maybe a few grizzly old men who hunt  
5 for their dinner every night.

6           To convince airlines that there are actually  
7 people who lived up there who would spend money was very  
8 difficult. I went from an airport with 350,000  
9 enplanements, actually 700,000 passengers to 3.2 million  
10 because we were willing to spend money.

11           When I first got to that airport in 1991, we  
12 had a marketing budget of zero. Three years later, we had  
13 a marketing budget of \$600,000. I had a very, very willing  
14 city council and advisory board who was willing to give me  
15 that kind of money to do some marketing.

16           \$600,000 for a tiny airport is a lot of money.  
17 And you're going to hear from some other airports that will  
18 tell you that they just can't spend that kind of money. So  
19 I would think that in that, that way, you could be very  
20 helpful. It comes down to money.

21           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you.  
22 Representative Petrarca.

23           REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Thank you, Mr.  
24 Chairman. Mr. Testa, thanks for coming here to testify.  
25 Coming from Western Pennsylvania, I guess my, my concern



1 deals with the Pittsburgh International Airport. I  
2 understand there are problems with US Air in Philadelphia.

3 I think, as you testified, there's probably a  
4 little more acute in Pittsburgh.

5 MR. TESTA: Yes.

6 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: It sounds like one  
7 of the solutions is to, as you've stated, is to increase  
8 the competition. And being from Southwestern Pennsylvania,  
9 there's, practically everyone I know about that flies for  
10 business or pleasure has some story about trips to  
11 Cleveland, to fly in and out of Cleveland.

12 The amount of traffic going in and out of  
13 Cleveland from Pittsburgh is, it's outrageous. And, you  
14 know, to me, it seems like we should be able to do  
15 something a little more involved than try to provide some  
16 marketing dollars for, for these airports or these carriers  
17 to do studies or to market, what have you, as you stated.

18 Do you have any thoughts on -- well, or the  
19 question is, what, what can be done to open up these  
20 airports or an airport such as, such as Pittsburgh Airport,  
21 69 percent controlled by US Airways? Obviously, if that  
22 control was at 51 percent, as in Philly, or something  
23 lower, those fares would come down.

24 MR. TESTA: There's several answers to your  
25 question. And I don't want to make it more complicated

1 than it really is. Pittsburgh has done, they just landed  
2 AirTran, eight flights a day going to Chicago, New York, La  
3 Guardia and Atlanta, which is business markets.

4 By lowering airfares, you'll find matching  
5 airfares to those markets. Pittsburgh has a lot of  
6 capacity and a lot of gates that can be used. Another  
7 underlying thing is Pittsburgh by itself without being a  
8 hub is a small market airport-wise.

9 I mean, its O and D market -- that means its  
10 origination and destination based upon the population of  
11 the area -- is more akin to Providence, Rhode Island than  
12 it is to Philadelphia or Chicago. And most of the traffic,  
13 about 80 percent of the traffic in Pittsburgh is  
14 pass-through traffic which never get out of it. And it's  
15 really a convenience to the airline that's using it as a  
16 hub.

17 But I would say this about the administration  
18 in Pittsburgh, who I know very well, they're doing a good  
19 job in trying to get other competition into the area. And  
20 it really is about competition.

21 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: And how does that  
22 work? How can that happen in Pittsburgh?

23 MR. TESTA: By showing the marketplace,  
24 showing what a premium they pay for airfares and how the  
25 low cost carrier come in and actually make money at the

1 airport. And what the low cost carrier also does is  
2 stimulate the market. And one of the, one of the carriers  
3 can stimulate.

4 Now, as far as governmental action, you got to  
5 understand that the federal government has preempted states  
6 in this area. You cannot enact anything that has to do  
7 with rates, routes or, rates and routes rather, nothing at  
8 all. I mean -- so that limits the ability for a state  
9 legislature to act.

10 But you have the bully pulpit, and there's  
11 something to be said about the bully pulpit.

12 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Does US Air -- I  
13 know some of your articles, you headlined a Philadelphia  
14 article talking about how US Air controls some of the  
15 traffic that comes through that airport. I mean, can  
16 they -- and we hear these stories in Pittsburgh.

17 I don't know. I don't have a complete  
18 understanding of this. But can US Air, for instance, in  
19 Pittsburgh control the amount of competition that comes  
20 in --

21 MR. TESTA: No.

22 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: -- by locking or  
23 controlling so many gates? I mean, how does that happen?

24 MR. TESTA: In both airports -- when  
25 Pittsburgh was being built, that was a very expensive

1 proposition; and it was backed by US Airways. I mean,  
2 let's face it, they're paying the bill. And bottom line  
3 is, for all their fees, they pay off the bonds.

4 I forget how much it cost at the time, a  
5 billion dollars or somewhere in that range. And a result  
6 of which, in order to make those bond sales palatable, they  
7 got long-term leases from US Airways on a number of gates.  
8 So they leased a huge number of gates to US Airways because  
9 US Airways promised that it would keep those gates and keep  
10 paying the bonds.

11 Even if they pulled out, they're still  
12 responsible. So the --

13 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Even if they don't  
14 use them?

15 MR. TESTA: Right. They pay for those gates.  
16 Same with Philadelphia. They have some long-term 20-year  
17 leases that are not up till 2006. And US Airways, to be  
18 honestly fair about it, has underwritten, not with a sign,  
19 but has taken so many gates and said I will pay for these  
20 gates no matter what. And if you don't make enough money  
21 by the end of the year, I will take money out of our  
22 corporate pocket and get you back up to where you can  
23 afford to pay everything.

24 So there's a risk on both ends. So to be  
25 fair, the airlines underwrite some of that stuff. Now,

1 there are airports like Phoenix which have no leases. It's  
2 a day-to-day operation. But Phoenix has a huge population  
3 and will soon be bigger than Philadelphia.

4 In fact, I think the next census, they will  
5 take over the 5th spot from Philadelphia in the country.  
6 They have a huge population, growing rapidly. And they  
7 have no -- they operate on a day-to-day operation basis.  
8 And if they want to move you around, they move you around.  
9 There's a lot of schemes there.

10 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Do you know why the  
11 operating margins are so poor for US Air?

12 MR. TESTA: I would request that you ask that  
13 question of the US Air people when they testify.

14 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Okay. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Representative McGill.

16 REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: Thank you, Mr.  
17 Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Testa. Mr. Testa, is there any  
18 incentive for, for Philadelphia to bring in a low cost  
19 airline?

20 MR. TESTA: In Philadelphia's case, they don't  
21 have enough gates.

22 REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: They don't have enough  
23 gates. They don't have enough -- they don't have capacity  
24 on the runways.

25 MR. TESTA: No.

1                   REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: And they're  
2 landlocked. So --

3                   MR. TESTA: It's very, very difficult.

4                   REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: We've spoken about  
5 this before in the other hearing that you were a part of.

6                   MR. TESTA: Yes.

7                   REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: And I see the numbers.  
8 And if it's simply supply and demand, wouldn't really the  
9 only incentive be that the, that a number of people will  
10 jump on I-95 and go down to Baltimore-Washington instead of  
11 flying out of Philly International because they can get a  
12 better rate on a Southwest which we can't get in?

13                   MR. TESTA: Well, between those people who  
14 drive from Philadelphia and suburbs to either Newark or  
15 Baltimore, it's about 6 million a year.

16                   REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: So there's 6 million  
17 air passengers leaving Philadelphia and going elsewhere?

18                   MR. TESTA: Yes. And you got to understand,  
19 too, Philadelphia is over capacity right now 10 times a day  
20 even on a beautiful clear day. It's actually over its  
21 airfield capacity 10 times a day. It only has 68 gates or  
22 69 gates. And of those, US Air only controls 38 of them.

23                   But the other airlines, United has a bunch of  
24 gates, TWA has a bunch of gates, Continental, and Delta.  
25 They all have a bunch of gates which control most of them.

1 AirTran, when it tried to get into Philadelphia, really  
2 there was no gates. So they had to piggyback.

3           And they're being handled by United for a  
4 while until the airport, as you see in that article, builds  
5 four more gates for AirTran, which was started when I was  
6 there. So there are some physical limitations. And even  
7 if -- now, they're building, with US Air's help, a brand  
8 new international terminal and a brand new commuter  
9 terminal to add more gate capacity to the airport.

10           But even when they bring that capacity, the  
11 airfield can't take anymore capacity. It's a delay waiting  
12 to happen.

13           REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: So what's, what's the  
14 solution? I mean, you know, do they, do they build into  
15 the river, do they --

16           MR. TESTA: No. There are solutions. They  
17 started a master plan that would have given, we could have  
18 increased capacity from 500,000 to about 1,200,000  
19 operations a year that would have made it so much easier  
20 and would have actually supported flights directly to Asia  
21 nonstop. But it won't happen.

22           In fact, I think that master plan that was  
23 started was already junked.

24           REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: Thank you.

25           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Representative

1 Laughlin.

2           REPRESENTATIVE LAUGHLIN: Just, I think, in  
3 the last two or three months, Pan Am was coming from  
4 Pittsburgh to Harrisburg and back. And the fare for  
5 round-trip was \$279. But there were flights coming down  
6 here with maybe one or two people on there.

7           So just, I guess, two weeks ago, they just  
8 discontinued. I don't know whether people didn't know  
9 that, you know, they had a low fare like that or what  
10 happened. But I guess they didn't advertise enough. But  
11 it just seems like even though their fares were \$279 for  
12 those two or three months, the US Airways did not come down  
13 on their fares.

14           I guess they probably expected them to close  
15 up after a few more months.

16           MR. TESTA: I will be totally honest with you.  
17 I know Pan Am like I know the back of my hand because  
18 they're based in New Hampshire, and I know the two owners  
19 very well. One is an heir to the Carnegie, Carnegie Mellon  
20 fortune; and he likes to play with toys. And he put an  
21 airline in to play with.

22           Pan Am does not sell its tickets through  
23 travel agents. So travel agents can't get you a ticket on  
24 Pan Am. They do not advertise. They just hope people get  
25 on the web and try to find low fares. And Pan Am has aging



1 727s that it owns. I think it owns three of them and  
2 leases two or three others.

3           They're pulled not only out of Pittsburgh,  
4 they're pulled out of mid-America and mid-East. It was  
5 running from New Hampshire. They called it Boston to  
6 Florida. And they couldn't get enough people on. And they  
7 don't run to Orlando. They run to Orlando-Sanford.

8           And every place that they ran to gave them  
9 free landing fees to try to get them to run there. And  
10 they're running to Garry, Indiana instead of Chicago. So  
11 Pan Am is not a good -- remember, in the beginning slide, I  
12 said some of the low fare upstarts have been poorly run.

13           My opinion, strictly personal opinion, Pan Am  
14 was one of them. And Pan Am didn't have the marketing  
15 plan, didn't have a strategy. And if I were US Air, all  
16 they'd do is ignore them. US Air did not do any predatory  
17 practices with Pan Am. They just ignored them.

18           They went away by themselves because they  
19 couldn't convince them because they didn't spend any money.  
20 So one has to be careful of the level of competition. I  
21 think in Pittsburgh now with AirTran, they have several  
22 ex-US Airways people running the airline.

23           They have got a business plan that's really  
24 well thought out and good and very low fares with no  
25 Saturday night stay required. You can buy a single way

1 with a \$25 upgrade to the front of the plane. And you'll  
2 find -- I think they're starting off service to -- and I'm  
3 not touting any particular service.

4 But that's competition. That is competition.  
5 And that will give you flights to Atlanta, Chicago, New  
6 York. And maybe they're going to go Philly to Pittsburgh.  
7 I don't know. But I agree.

8 REPRESENTATIVE LAUGHLIN: I have no idea of  
9 what it costs an airline to fly, say, a short period like  
10 that, a short distance from Pittsburgh to Harrisburg. I  
11 mean, what kind of gas, I mean, how many gallons do they  
12 use?

13 MR. TESTA: Well, it's pounds of fuel. But  
14 they use -- it all depends on the aircraft. All of the  
15 newer aircraft -- and I can give you an example. Most of  
16 the new aircraft, the newer aircraft have about a 30 to 33  
17 percent fuel savings over the older aircraft.

18 And fuel is a huge hit on the airlines  
19 today. They were buying fuel in the 40 cents a gallon  
20 range -- because jet fuel is really highly refined  
21 kerosene, like number 2 heating oil -- and 50 cent range.  
22 And then all of a sudden, fuel started going through the  
23 roof.

24 Those airlines that hedged prices -- meaning  
25 they bought future contracts against future prices at low

1 fares -- they are doing okay. The smaller carriers, none  
2 of them have the financial ability to spend lots of money  
3 buying a futures contract. So they buy on the spot market  
4 today.

5 And they're paying through the nose for fuel  
6 at \$1.20, \$1.30 a gallon. And that's costing them a ton of  
7 money, whereas the bigger guys, including Southwest and  
8 AirTran, are hedging fuel. How much does it cost to run?  
9 I can't tell you because that cost varies so much from  
10 airline to airline.

11 I can tell you that US Air used to run a DC-9  
12 from Manchester to --

13 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Perhaps US Air could  
14 answer that one.

15 MR. TESTA: Yeah, probably. That would be  
16 better. You're right.

17 REPRESENTATIVE LAUGHLIN: Okay. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Final question,  
19 Representative Pippy.

20 REPRESENTATIVE PIPPY: Thank you, Mr.  
21 Chairman. The question I have goes to the hub comparisons.  
22 In particular, you mentioned Pittsburgh International at 8  
23 to \$9 cost per enplaned passenger.

24 MR. TESTA: Yes.

25 REPRESENTATIVE PIPPY: That seems to be like

1 an old number. They've been talking less than 6 now.  
2 Maybe US Air would know this as well. But what does that  
3 mean? If Pittsburgh International is at, say, \$5.70 or \$6  
4 and Chicago's at 13 but they have more -- why do we want to  
5 always reduce the cost per enplaned passenger; and how does  
6 that benefit the airport?

7 MR. TESTA: It reflects the airport costs on  
8 the airline. So if I have a hub that I have, costs me  
9 \$2.45 an enplaned passenger, my airport fees for a  
10 100-passenger aircraft are \$245, whereas for a \$113  
11 cost -- and some of them I think as high as, La Guardia  
12 might be as high as 18 today -- \$113 is \$1,300 for that  
13 same plane. A difference between \$1,300 and \$245 is \$850 a  
14 plane.

15 If you run 700 flights -- I'm sorry -- 350  
16 flights in, 350 flights out, it's 350 times \$800. Now,  
17 you're talking some serious bread every day. So that cost  
18 is -- but total cost, airport cost of themselves only run  
19 between 3 and 6 or 7 percent of an airline's total costs.

20 So it's not overwhelmingly high. But they're  
21 the highest cost of labor set by fuel and aircraft costs.  
22 Today, aircraft costs are huge. A new airplane costs  
23 between 50 and -- I don't even know what the 330 costs  
24 today. 150 million? -- between 50 and \$150 million per  
25 aircraft.

1           But those costs -- I think Pittsburgh started  
2 off at 15, but it's managed to get its cost way down. Now,  
3 I know Philadelphia is in the \$6.40 range. Pittsburgh,  
4 last figures I saw for 1999 were \$8.61. They've managed to  
5 come down quite a bit. And that's through efficiencies.

6           REPRESENTATIVE PIPPY: Bottom line, though,  
7 the competition seems to be the way to reduce fares and you  
8 can run an efficient airline, airport. We see that number  
9 a lot. And that's why -- it's 3 to 6 percent then you're  
10 saying of the total budget?

11           MR. TESTA: Yes.

12           REPRESENTATIVE PIPPY: Thank you, Mr.  
13 Chairman.

14           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you very much,  
15 Mr. Testa.

16           MR. TESTA: My pleasure.

17           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: The next testifier  
18 will be Paul Hudson, who is the Executive Director of the  
19 Aviation Consumer Action Project. Make yourself at home.  
20 While you're getting set, I would just like to recognize  
21 Mr. William Shaffer, who is the Director of the  
22 Pennsylvania Bureau of Aviation. Bill, thank you very much  
23 for attending today.

24           Paul, thank you for joining us today. And  
25 when you're ready, you may begin.

1           MR. HUDSON: Thank you. Good afternoon. My  
2 name is Paul Hudson. I'm the Executive Director of the  
3 Aviation Consumer Action Project or ACAP. ACAP was founded  
4 as an independent nonprofit organization by Ralph Nader in  
5 1971 to act as a voice and ear for air travelers on major  
6 national aviation issues.

7           We have previously testified on behalf of  
8 consumers on airline competition and merger issues before  
9 the US Congress, specifically the House Judiciary Committee  
10 in '98 and a Senate Subcommittee on Antitrust before  
11 Senator Specter last fall.

12           We will be filing our comments on the  
13 United/US Airways merger and related mergers with the  
14 Justice Department this week. I'm assuming -- I think  
15 properly after hearing most of the last witness -- that  
16 other witnesses have testified as to the problem.

17           And my testimony will then focus on what  
18 Pennsylvania State Government can do to bring down high  
19 airfares; and secondly, why they're so high; and thirdly, I  
20 would like to mention some of the economic problems that  
21 the state will face if nothing is done and the airfares  
22 remain high.

23           Affordable and convenient air travel, since  
24 air travel is the primary form of long distance travel, is  
25 an essential element of the modern economy. Areas that

1 lack this are at an enormous disadvantage, similar to  
2 communities in the 19th Century that were bypassed by the  
3 railroads or in the second half of the 20th Century that  
4 lacked interstate highways.

5           Businesses will not relocate to areas without  
6 good air transportation, and existing businesses have a  
7 large incentive to move away from such areas. And  
8 affordability and convenience are the two criteria as to  
9 why we need to find good air service.

10           The problem of high airfares, of course, is  
11 not unique to Pennsylvania. The six major domestic  
12 airlines, which are United, American, Delta, Northwest,  
13 Continental, US Airways, and Northwest, have learned since  
14 1995 how to prevent most low cost airlines from competing  
15 effectively with them.

16           They use the lack of fair access rules to key  
17 facilities and also the laws that prohibit foreign  
18 competition and capital investment to lock or squeeze out  
19 low cost competitors. US Airways has been in a dominant  
20 position in Pennsylvania, and it has used this to maintain  
21 high airfares and to keep low cost airlines out.

22           Now, this is done by a number of techniques.  
23 And I'd just like to mention some of the major ones. They  
24 may or may not apply to all of your situations here in  
25 Pennsylvania. The first way it's done is through

1 monopoly-like contracts with airport authorities,  
2 especially long-term gate leases and what has been called  
3 the majority in interest clause.

4           This is a clause that's put in many airport  
5 contracts and even buying ventures. It gives an airline or  
6 a group of airlines that is dominant at an airport a veto  
7 power over airport expansion. When these methods fail,  
8 predatory pricing is often used.

9           This involves two things: A new entrant comes  
10 in, and the existing airline will then flood the market  
11 usually with additional flights that bracket the schedule  
12 of the international airline. They will also reduce their  
13 fares temporarily to the same or less than what the new  
14 entrant is charging.

15           Once the new entrant is driven out, which  
16 usually is a matter of weeks, then the fares are brought  
17 back up; and the additional flights are eliminated. We  
18 have proposed to DOT some antipredatory pricing rules that  
19 would reduce, if not eliminate, this practice.

20           Finally -- and I think this is particularly  
21 relevant in Pennsylvania from what I have seen in some of  
22 the testimony at other hearings -- the dominant airline  
23 will often use the promise of jobs or threats to jobs with  
24 airport and government officials to block competition that  
25 would otherwise lower airfares.



1           In essence, the argument is made, Well, if you  
2 don't play ball with us, we will pick up our marbles and we  
3 will take our operation somewhere else. And therefore, the  
4 jobs are eliminated. If you're serious about reducing  
5 airfares in Pennsylvania, you have the power in state  
6 government to do so.

7           Some of the things that you can do I have  
8 listed here. First is to outlaw monopoly contracts by  
9 Pennsylvania airport authorities as in restraint of trade.  
10 Airport authorities are usually local government  
11 authorities. And the state, in general, charters them and  
12 has broad powers over them.

13           If the federal government will not outlaw such  
14 contracts, the state can do so in various ways. By the  
15 way, airports are not generally regulated in your  
16 contracting methods by the federal government. Some other  
17 specifics would be to pass shared gate access rules so that  
18 all airlines can share gates when they're not used by the  
19 primary leaseholder.

20           This rule was in effect when railroads were  
21 the main source of long distance travel. And it's still on  
22 the books in US DOT. What it provides for is that when a  
23 gate is not being used by the primary leaseholder, then it  
24 can be used by another carrier.

25           The carrier has to pay fair value for it in

1 terms of rent. But if it can't agree on what the value is,  
2 then a condemnation-like procedure is followed and value is  
3 set. So therefore, a dominant carrier cannot lock out new  
4 ones where there is excess gate capacity, as there is at  
5 every airport.

6           Secondly, by outlawing the majority in  
7 interest clause. Now, this probably could not be done for  
8 some of the existing contracts; but it could certainly be  
9 done for future ones. Thirdly would be to pass -- and this  
10 can be done at a state level -- an antiprice gouging rule  
11 for intrastate flights.

12           The rule we had proposed is called the Triple  
13 50 Rule. And it would cap fares at 50 cents per passenger  
14 mile plus \$50 for all flights over 50 miles. Now, this is  
15 roughly 5 to 10 times the break-even point. It's not going  
16 to amount, give you a low fare.

17           But for instance, for a 300-mile trip, the  
18 fare would be approximately \$200 plus tax. This can be  
19 done for intrastate fares. It cannot be done for  
20 interstate fares. And it would be grounded on the police  
21 power the state has to prevent price gouging, which it  
22 doesn't -- most states have price gouging laws in a number  
23 of other areas.

24           Fourthly would be to limit airport leases.  
25 Some are now up to 30 years in length. And this not only

1 locks out competition, but it gives the leaseholder often a  
2 windfall in terms of a value of the lease going up  
3 drastically over the term.

4           Fifthly, we would encourage you to look at  
5 regional jets. These are jets with subsidy -- excuse  
6 me -- with a capacity of 20 to 60 passengers. They've only  
7 been operating really in the last 5 years, and they make it  
8 much more economic to serve small and medium-sized  
9 communities. And Pennsylvania has quite a few of them.

10           They have two big advantages: One, they are  
11 faster; and secondly, they have a longer range. So  
12 communities with a population of, we believe, in the  
13 neighborhood of 50 to perhaps as low as 30,000 can have  
14 regular jet service, whereas now they would be restricted  
15 to turbo props going to usually a hub airport where people  
16 would have to transfer to another airplane and get on a  
17 100- to 200-passenger jet to fly to their destination.

18           You can have air service between smaller  
19 communities. And also, you can have it to larger city  
20 airports. And where those city airports are crowded, the  
21 regional jets can fly into secondary airports, which the  
22 major ones cannot.

23           Some states are now, in effect, enacting  
24 subsidies to encourage this. Many of the companies that  
25 are wanting to start up regional jet service do not have

1 the capital, and they can use subsidies to get the proper  
2 financing.

3           The major airlines have, in their labor  
4 contracts, limitations on the total fleet that can be  
5 regional jets. It's generally been 20 percent. This is  
6 strictly a job protection provision because the pilots who  
7 fly the larger jets make more money than those who fly the  
8 smaller jets. And the concern is that, by the policy, is  
9 if regional jets come on too fast, some of the high priced  
10 jobs will be lost.

11           Finally would be to guarantee low cost  
12 airlines the facilities they need, particularly in  
13 Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, which of course there are many  
14 airports in Pennsylvania. If you take these steps,  
15 airfares, we believe, will decline. If you don't and  
16 things don't happen on their own, then Pennsylvania economy  
17 will obviously suffer.

18           Now, the areas around you used to be high  
19 airfares; but they're no longer. In the last three years,  
20 Upstate New York, Ohio, New England, Baltimore, Washington,  
21 Long Island are all now served by Southwest, Metrojet, and  
22 others. So Pennsylvania has become an island of high  
23 airfares.

24           A US DOT study that looked at this rather  
25 exhaustively, for instance, found that where Southwest is

1 providing service, whether you're flying on Southwest or  
2 not, the fares are about 62 percent of what they would  
3 otherwise be.

4 Another example is Albany, New York to  
5 Washington, D.C. I lived for a couple of decades in  
6 Albany. Until this past May, the fare was \$650 round-trip,  
7 a distance of about 300 miles. It's now \$140. And that's  
8 unrestricted walk-up fare. Obviously, Pittsburgh and  
9 places like that are at a big disadvantage when they don't  
10 have those kind of fares.

11 That really concludes my testimony. I'd be  
12 glad to answer any questions.

13 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you. I guess  
14 the overall in the suggestions -- and I really thank you  
15 for laying those out for us -- overall, how do you, how do  
16 you attract an investment or ask any company to come and  
17 invest in your community if you're not going to give them,  
18 let's say, a longer lease period rather than three -- three  
19 years seems awful short to me to make the kinds of  
20 commitments necessary to --

21 MR. HUDSON: Well, there can be longer lease  
22 terms; but they can have options. They can have, they can  
23 have buy-out clauses. There are various ways beyond this.  
24 I'm not suggesting that, that you necessarily have a  
25 situation where someone can be thrown out after, after,

1 after three years.

2 But the situation you have now is with leases  
3 going out as long as 30 years, the existing leaseholder can  
4 lock everyone else out.

5 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: I assume that the  
6 longer lease periods are probably in relationship to the,  
7 to the financing of the gates and makes a big circle here,  
8 I guess. But probably that's -- my perception is that  
9 that's, it follows the lease --

10 MR. HUDSON: There's a general, there's a  
11 general interest by airport authorities to relieve local  
12 taxpayers of the risk and the burden of floating these  
13 bonds that are used to finance airport improvements,  
14 whether it's runways or gates or whatever.

15 And that has skewed many of the contracts  
16 giving major carriers far more control than they would  
17 otherwise normally have. We can understand that interest.  
18 However, if you're looking at the bigger picture,  
19 particularly on a state or regional level, you want to have  
20 an airport facility that is both affordable and convenient  
21 for the consumer.

22 And that means that many of these contracts,  
23 you know, have to be scrutinized. And they are not  
24 compatible, in our view, with competitive low cost airfares  
25 in some cases.

1                   CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: So to be able to  
2 accomplish that, I guess what you're suggesting is that  
3 rather than have the airlines basically take that burden  
4 away from the taxpayer and the municipality or the city or  
5 the authority, that your opinion would be that in the long  
6 run, it would be better off running or investing in those  
7 bonds themselves and doing a clear bond or financing issue  
8 without respect to any long-term lease agreements?

9                   MR. HUDSON: Yes. I mean, there are many ways  
10 to skin this cat. Bonds can be insured. They may have  
11 higher risk. It may carry a higher interest rate. There's  
12 many ways that the state could at least partially  
13 underwrite these things as a guarantor or have an authority  
14 that does so as it does for many municipalities in other  
15 areas.

16                   CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Has some of the  
17 suggested changes been enacted in other states that you're  
18 aware of?

19                   MR. HUDSON: No, they have not. And I think a  
20 lot of the reason is that as the previous witness  
21 indicated, the feeling is the states can do nothing. But  
22 our analysis is that that's really not the case. And the  
23 other, the other reason, I guess, is that there are fewer  
24 and fewer areas that don't have any low cost airfares or,  
25 you know, relatively speaking.

1                    Pennsylvania is -- I believe that had there  
2 not been a break in the situation in the last year, that  
3 New York would have seriously taken up some of these. But  
4 there has been a major break now with service at Buffalo  
5 and Albany, also Long Island with low cost service. And  
6 that seems to be spreading rapidly.

7                    CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: My last question is  
8 a quick one. Under the Triple 50 Rule, what happens  
9 if -- the 50 cents per passenger mile plus \$50 for all  
10 flights over 50 miles, what happens if fuel cost goes up or  
11 operating cost goes up?

12                    There's a contract that's negotiated with the  
13 union. And obviously, someone is going to pay the bill.  
14 Is that -- how do you adjust that into the 50 rule; or is  
15 that 50 cents per passenger mile, is that adjustable?

16                    MR. HUDSON: I don't think that it's, it needs  
17 to be adjustable with any foreseeable fuel price increase.

18                    CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: How do you --

19                    MR. HUDSON: We're talking about now, as I  
20 say, giving them a 50 to 100 percent profit margin. If  
21 you look at the industry as a whole and reports that are  
22 filed with the SEC regarding revenue per passenger mile,  
23 from 1996 through '99, the industry domestically had record  
24 profits each year.

25                    No airline has, to my knowledge, reported more



1 than 11 or 12 cents per passenger mile. What you're seeing  
2 now in areas like Pennsylvania with these high airfares is  
3 consumers, in effect, having to pay 80 cents to up to \$2 a  
4 mile. That's equivalent, in our view, to paying \$8 to \$20  
5 per gallon of gas.

6 And airfares, it's not generally understood by  
7 the public how high the fares really are. But it's become  
8 a cliché that it's cheaper to fly to Europe than it is  
9 between many cities in the northeast. And members of ours  
10 who are coming here from other countries, they cannot  
11 believe how extraordinarily high the fares are here  
12 domestically.

13 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: But I don't -- I could  
14 be wrong, but I don't know of any other countries that use  
15 the Triple 50 Rule.

16 MR. HUDSON: There is a, a cap on  
17 international airfares, a reasonableness cap which is in  
18 the treaties with other countries. So an airline cannot --

19 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: How much is that per  
20 passenger mile?

21 MR. HUDSON: It's far less than 10 cents for  
22 Trans-Atlantic or Trans-Pacific flights.

23 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Okay. Thank you very  
24 much. Representative Leh.

25 REPRESENTATIVE LEH: Yes. Thank you, Mr.

1 Chairman. Just one question, Mr. Hudson. And that is, you  
2 recommend passing shared gate access rules. Are such rules  
3 in place at any other airports in the country or the world  
4 for that matter; and if so, how do they work?

5 MR. HUDSON: They're not. And the lack of  
6 fair access rules is the main, that with the shelter from  
7 foreign competition, in our view, the main reason why we  
8 have this crisis in competition in this industry. In every  
9 other infrastructure industry, we have fair access rules.

10 For example, in telephones, it used to be  
11 originally that AT&T, even after they technically lost  
12 their monopoly, could say to a competing telephone company,  
13 these are our wires. These are our switches. You just  
14 can't use them. The same thing goes for electric, for gas,  
15 other infrastructure industries.

16 You cannot get competition in any  
17 infrastructure industry unless all the players can have  
18 reasonable access to the key facilities. And in addition  
19 to airport gates, that includes things like where it's  
20 called code sharing, which is access to reservation  
21 systems, access to the computer reservation systems, access  
22 to interline baggage and frequent flyer programs.

23 Right now, because there are no fair access  
24 rules, the smaller carriers cannot effectively compete with  
25 the larger ones. The larger carriers make agreements

1 between themselves -- often called alliances -- by which  
2 they share these key facilities. But there's no fair  
3 access rule.

4 So there is no way for smaller airlines to  
5 break in on a competitive basis in those situations.

6 REPRESENTATIVE LEH: I'm assuming that with  
7 regards to the gates, the airlines have long-term  
8 contracts. If such legislation was enacted, how would that  
9 affect the contracts? The contracts would have to run out  
10 before the legislation actually took --

11 MR. HUDSON: Yes. But contracts are always  
12 coming up. And ultimately, the state has a power of  
13 eminent domain.

14 REPRESENTATIVE LEH: Okay. Thank you very  
15 much.

16 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you.  
17 Representative McGill.

18 REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: Thank you. Thank you,  
19 Mr. Hudson. I apologize if you were here for the previous  
20 presenter. But I'm going to ask basically the same  
21 question with respect to the City of Philadelphia. I ask  
22 you how, based upon facilities that we currently have at  
23 the Philadelphia International Airport, how you would  
24 propose to get an economy carrier in there when we have  
25 roughly 80 gates, we're landlocked, we have a regional

1 runway that was put in after 10 years or 12 years of work  
2 and labor only to have an enormous crane sitting right down  
3 at the end of the runway so we can't bring these regional  
4 jets in?

5           We have two runways. The two runways that are  
6 there, you have to cross one runway in order to get around.  
7 And to come in with kind of a comment that bringing in a  
8 regional carrier or bringing in a low cost airline will  
9 solve this problem when the airport is already running at  
10 just about maximum capacity, I would like to hear how you  
11 resolve that because I don't see that it's, I don't see  
12 that it's a problem with Philadelphia trying to prohibit  
13 people from coming in other than the fact that unless  
14 you're going to dig out into the river, there's no place to  
15 put them.

16           MR. HUDSON: Well, I'm not familiar with the  
17 crane at the end of the runway problem.

18           REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: Well, it's there.  
19 Believe me. And all you have to do is try to get a  
20 regional jet in, and you will hit it.

21           MR. HUDSON: I assume that's something that,  
22 at some level, the government has power to remove.

23           REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: Well, not at \$300  
24 million which it cost to put the thing in there. It's the  
25 Kvaerner crane sitting at the Kvaerner Shipyard that

1 happens to be right in line with the end of the runway so  
2 that there is concern there. And it was put in after the  
3 fact.

4 But believe it or not, we have to live with  
5 that. And just throwing the, throwing the option of  
6 bringing in a low cost carrier doesn't resolve that problem  
7 one bit.

8 MR. HUDSON: Well, I can suggest some general  
9 things. I can't say that they will all apply to your  
10 airport in Philadelphia.

11 REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: Except you're  
12 generalizing with the airports in Pennsylvania. And our  
13 major airports are Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and  
14 Philadelphia. Philadelphia being the major of majors. And  
15 just to take shots, you know, it's not -- we need to have  
16 some answers if that's what you're providing.

17 MR. HUDSON: Philadelphia is, is not an overly  
18 congested airport compared to -- it does not certainly make  
19 the top 5 list, and it normally wouldn't be near the top  
20 10. There are airports that have many more serious  
21 congestion problems than Philadelphia.

22 I would suggest that if there was a, for  
23 instance, a fair, a fair access, set fair access rules or  
24 shared gate rules at Philadelphia, that you would, you  
25 would, you would find any number of low cost carriers would

1 be, would be interested in providing service.

2 In terms of if there is not enough runway  
3 capacity, the short-term answer, of course, is to make sure  
4 that the runway capacity is used efficiently for as many  
5 hours a day as possible. Longer term, you may have to look  
6 at beefing up a secondary airport and/or even building a  
7 new airport if there is a problem with land.

8 Our general -- and the congestion problem  
9 right now has, of course, become a crisis because it's  
10 causing enormous increase in delays. We're now up to the  
11 point where one out of three flights are being seriously  
12 delayed an hour, whereas three years ago it was one out of  
13 five.

14 We have suggested a 4-point plan to reduce  
15 congestion. And I believe that it relates to this problem  
16 also. First is to --

17 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Paul, could you  
18 summarize and make your link quickly. That's an issue --

19 MR. HUDSON: I'd be glad to provide specifics,  
20 but I can't without taking a lot of time to get into --

21 REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: I think you have some  
23 information that's available on that issue. If you would  
24 like or if you could --

25 MR. HUDSON: Yeah. Our web site I can refer

1 you to has much more detail.

2 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: If you would get that  
3 to Dana over here.

4 MR. HUDSON: Yes. It's on the cover of our  
5 report.

6 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Okay. Representative  
7 Marsico.

8 REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: Thank you, Mr.  
9 Chairman. Just a few quick questions. One of your  
10 recommendations is to encourage regional jets of 20 to 60  
11 passengers between smaller cities, and you say with  
12 subsidies. What do you mean by subsidies?

13 MR. HUDSON: Basically guaranteeing that the  
14 provider, that they will have a certain amount of revenue.

15 REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: Where would those  
16 subsidies come from?

17 MR. HUDSON: They normally come from  
18 government.

19 REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: So upstate local and  
20 federal --

21 MR. HUDSON: For instance, New York passed  
22 some legislation a couple of years ago providing for, among  
23 other things, subsidies.

24 REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: Any other states  
25 where --

1           MR. HUDSON: They also could involve partially  
2 underwriting bond issues to buy the planes, things of that  
3 nature, to lower interest rates.

4           REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: So you said New York  
5 passed similar to what you --

6           MR. HUDSON: Yes. They passed a legislation  
7 that went beyond infrastructure and would actually provide  
8 operating subsidies. It turns out that a lot of this has  
9 not been necessary because there's been a big increase in  
10 low cost air travel.

11           But for smaller communities, I think you're  
12 going to need, at least initially, subsidies.

13           REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: Okay. One more  
14 question, Mr. Chairman. You mentioned that Southwest  
15 Airlines has raised fares that are 62 percent of the other  
16 airlines. Okay. Are you aware of Southwest being, having  
17 any gates at all in Pennsylvania; or do they have any gates  
18 at all here?

19           MR. HUDSON: No. What I meant to say was that  
20 in markets where Southwest serves the market, the fares, on  
21 average, are 62 percent lower, not necessarily on  
22 Southwest. And right now in Pennsylvania, if you want  
23 Southwest, you have to drive out of state.

24           REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: Okay. So you're  
25 saying that Southwest is really, is not part of the



1 Pennsylvania market at all as far as having gates or  
2 anything like that?

3 MR. HUDSON: No. I think it probably has  
4 maybe a slight effect on keeping airfares lower in the  
5 western part of the state because people are driving to  
6 Buffalo and Cleveland.

7 REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: What can we do to  
8 bring Southwest Airlines into Pennsylvania to, or those  
9 lower rates? I guess that's the bottom line.

10 MR. HUDSON: I can't speak for Southwest.

11 REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: What are your  
12 suggestions?

13 MR. HUDSON: They generally, they generally  
14 have certain criteria which are readily available as to  
15 what they need in order to go into a community. One is  
16 certain size population base, which is normally several  
17 hundred thousand people at a minimum.

18 Secondly -- and I -- second only to that is  
19 they need to have the ability to get into and out of an  
20 airport quickly because the way they make their money in  
21 large part involves short turnaround times.

22 REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: Okay. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you.

24 Representative Pippy.

25 REPRESENTATIVE PIPPY: Thank you, Mr.

1 Chairman. In the interest of time, I'll reduce my number  
2 of questions. First, you mentioned monopoly contracts by  
3 Pennsylvania airport authorities. Which one did that? Do  
4 we have any that have established -- one of your key points  
5 was outlaw monopoly contracts by Pennsylvania airport  
6 authorities. I'd like to know which one of our authorities  
7 has done that.

8 MR. HUDSON: I'm speaking generally of all  
9 airports.

10 REPRESENTATIVE PIPPY: Okay. I just want to  
11 establish that. First, we don't have any authorities that  
12 have a monopoly contract or that established one?

13 MR. HUDSON: Well, I don't know whether you do  
14 or not. Most airports do. I'll give you some examples.

15 REPRESENTATIVE PIPPY: But in Pennsylvania,  
16 because this is -- here's my point. And I think my  
17 colleague brought it up earlier. You're saying -- and I  
18 understand this would be great if we were establishing a  
19 new airport and we were trying to do it.

20 But the situation we have right now, we don't  
21 have any airport authorities that I'm aware of that have  
22 established -- because most of the airports are not under  
23 authority. Or the ones that are, it's a brand new  
24 authority. So to say that by doing that would immediately  
25 reduce fares I don't think is -- I don't want to be

1 harsh -- but I don't think is true.

2           Second, you talked about limiting airport  
3 leases to three years. And then when questioned, you said,  
4 Well, let's maybe make it longer. You finished your  
5 testimony by saying that we can change a situation now if  
6 we do these things.

7           But is that not true because even if we could,  
8 which I would question you based on the contracts that may  
9 have been established by previous airports, governments, et  
10 cetera, I don't think we can do this. And I don't think  
11 any of these proposals are specific to Pennsylvania.

12           To tell the people who are watching this right  
13 now that the state can come in tomorrow and change  
14 contracts or outlaw monopolies that don't exist or  
15 authorities, contracts that have never existed I think  
16 gives the wrong idea.

17           Now, I understand your concern. But could you  
18 give me one of these examples here that may apply to  
19 Pennsylvania?

20           MR. HUDSON: Sure. Most airports have  
21 monopoly-like contracts with ground providers.

22           REPRESENTATIVE PIPPY: But not authorities  
23 because for the people watching, they're going to get the  
24 impression that our authorities are making monopoly  
25 contracts, which is not the case. So they'll come back and

1 say, Why don't you just change that?

2           And we can't. We can't change -- we got  
3 Pittsburgh International Airport in the state it's in now  
4 because the airlines and the county government and the  
5 people worked together and came up with a plan. The cost  
6 of that was a long-term lease. We understand that.

7           But the state government can't subsidize the  
8 airport the way you want to because for all those people  
9 who don't fly, they don't want their taxpayer dollars  
10 paying to subsidize someone that's flying.

11           My question -- and I'm going to stop, Mr.  
12 Chairman, because I think we can go on for a long time.  
13 But if there are ideas that can work in Pennsylvania given  
14 our current situation, I'd love to hear them or I'll check  
15 them up on your web page.

16           But I haven't seen one here that we could  
17 apply right now that would affect rates in the next five  
18 years.

19           MR. HUDSON: All I can say is that I'm not  
20 aware of any major airport that doesn't have some of these  
21 contracts.

22           REPRESENTATIVE PIPPY: Right. I agree they  
23 have them. But we can't -- this is a standing contract.  
24 Now, you said eminent domain. I won't get into that  
25 because I don't think any airline would ever come into

1 Pennsylvania if we just start to break their contract with  
2 eminent domain because of their fare.

3           We found out that competition is the key. But  
4 I want to make clear for the record that I haven't found  
5 the solution here in this testimony that will help reduce  
6 the fares within the next five years. Maybe long term when  
7 we redo the contracts, I agree. But we're not there.

8           We're trying to figure out a way to handle it  
9 now. Now, if you want to know why I'm interested, I was  
10 just appointed to the airport authority recently. I  
11 haven't gone to my first meeting. But I live one mile away  
12 from the Pittsburgh International Airport and have been  
13 facing these issues for a long time.

14           And I appreciate your testimony. But I still  
15 want something current. And the people I represent want  
16 something current that we can use, not an idea that may  
17 apply in 10 or 20 years. Thank you.

18           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you,  
19 Representative Pippy. And thank you, Mr. Hudson. I  
20 believe in your testimony when you started off, you  
21 indicated that a lot of these solutions are long-term  
22 solutions and it's pretty hard to implement under an  
23 existing authority or control.

24           And I don't want to put words in your mouth,  
25 but I think that's what you said.

1           MR. HUDSON: No. I believe most of these are  
2 short to medium-term solutions. The long-term solutions  
3 would be things like building more airports.

4           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Yeah. But you can't  
5 have it both ways. You testified that it would be next to  
6 impossible to go back and change an existing contract.

7           MR. HUDSON: What I said was that in some  
8 cases, you can change the existing contracts. In some  
9 cases, you can't. You would have a longer lead time where  
10 there's a body of contracts and they gradually turn over.  
11 But I would submit that if you don't do any of these things  
12 and if you don't look at what some other states around you  
13 and airports around you have done to lower airfares -- and  
14 they have dramatically come down in the last year in New  
15 York and some other places -- then the State of  
16 Pennsylvania will pay a price.

17           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: I just -- that brought  
18 on another question. I'm sorry for dragging this out. If  
19 I -- if my picture is correct, seeing a lot of that  
20 competition that's coming not necessarily from the, what we  
21 would call the ultra large airports -- and I'm talking  
22 about the northeast -- but it's, it really got its start in  
23 those medium-sized, which kind of bumps up the competition  
24 level; and that transcends up through the biggies. Is that  
25 a fair assumption?

1 MR. HUDSON: Well, Southwest, of course, is  
2 the main player in the low cost airfare business. And they  
3 have used a strategy in the northeast in the last three  
4 years really, which is to bypass the major airports which  
5 are heavily congested and to use medium-size airports but  
6 ones that are close enough to the large cities that people  
7 will go by ground transportation to them.

8 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you very much  
9 for being here today. The next testifiers, the next  
10 testifiers are Robert Hazel, Vice President of Properties  
11 and Facilities, US Airways; and Gary Harig, Vice President  
12 of Pricing and Inventory Management, US Airways.

13 Why don't we all just take about a 60-second  
14 break here while they get set up, and then we'll get back  
15 to business.

16 (A brief recess was taken.)

17 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Okay. Mr. Hazel and  
18 Mr. Harig, whenever you are ready.

19 MR. HAZEL: We're ready. And thank you for  
20 inviting us. My name is Bob Hazel, Vice President of  
21 Properties and Facilities for US Airways. With me is Gary  
22 Harig, our Vice President of Pricing and Inventory  
23 Management and also my colleague Sharon Taylor, who is  
24 Director of Public Affairs and who's in the audience.

25 Mr. Harig, Mr. Harig has a presentation on

1 pricing. And then I'd be glad to answer any questions  
2 about airport issues since we just had a lively discussion  
3 on that subject.

4 MR. HARIG: I've submitted written testimony  
5 for the group. What I'd like to do is go through a slide  
6 show which touches on some of the major points that are  
7 made, which were made in that testimony. And what I'd like  
8 to do is start with basically outlining very briefly US  
9 Airways' commitment to Pennsylvania because pricing is  
10 simply one element of that commitment.

11 We'll talk about some major factors that  
12 influence pricing and then get into some of the specifics  
13 that we've been talking about here before and how they  
14 impact prices. From the Commonwealth, we serve 16  
15 airports, 6 with jet service, 8 where we're the only  
16 airline. We serve 2 hubs, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, in  
17 the case of Philadelphia with 378 daily departures,  
18 Pittsburgh with 490.

19 We provide service to over 100 cities through  
20 these hubs throughout the United States, Canada, the  
21 Caribbean, and major points in Europe.

22 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Excuse me.

23 MR. HARIG: Certainly.

24 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Could I ask you a  
25 question? I know some of the members are flipping through



1 looking for that chart. Could we get hard copies of the,  
2 of this stuff?

3 MR. HARIG: Oh, certainly. I'll make hard  
4 copies for you. Of course. Certainly. In total, we have  
5 990 departures a day, almost 1,000 departures a day. In  
6 the year 2000, we enplaned 17.7 million passengers in the,  
7 within the Commonwealth. Fifteen million of those were on  
8 our mainliner jet service, the remainder 2.7 on the express  
9 service.

10 Continuing on to commitment. We provide  
11 employment to over 17,000 people, annual salaries 1.4  
12 billion, approximately 2.1 billion in total annual  
13 expenditures, total tax payments of about 57 million. And  
14 one point I think we're very proud of, we've been serving  
15 the Commonwealth since 1949. Our roots go back to all  
16 American Airways.

17 So with that, let me turn now to some of the,  
18 what I call macro elements that influence pricing. And  
19 these will be -- you'll see these will track throughout the  
20 conversation as we go on today. And there's really three:  
21 Market density, cost of providing service, and the  
22 competitive marketplace.

23 And certainly, they're not mutually exclusive.  
24 They're interrelated, and they're dependent upon one  
25 another. For example, the market density, which refers to

1 the volume of passengers, that allows you to fly more  
2 flights, provides you a larger passenger base, and lets you  
3 spread the cost over a larger passenger base, thus taking  
4 some of the pressure off of fares.

5           We're talking about intraPennsylvania service  
6 here. And one of the things I thought that would be  
7 interesting is we can look at the traffic volumes within  
8 the state. And we've expressed these in terms of average  
9 passengers per day each way.

10           This is just on an origin and destination  
11 basis. It does not include any of the traffic which would  
12 be flowing beyond any of these cities or beyond our hubs.  
13 We've highlighted those markets which have a passengers per  
14 day each way greater than 25.

15           And as you can see, there are a handful of  
16 them. But for the most part, many of the intraPennsylvania  
17 markets are characterized by fairly low traffic density. I  
18 mentioned before about costs and about spreading costs. If  
19 you look at airlines' costs -- and this is more than just  
20 US Airways. This includes some other airlines as  
21 well -- approximately 60 percent of our costs really don't  
22 vary with mileage.

23           And if you think about it, if you have a gate  
24 agent that's working a flight that is going 200 miles or a  
25 gate agent that's working a flight that's going 600 miles,

1 it really doesn't matter. That gate agent's salary is  
2 going to be fixed for that one flight.

3           What does matter is the number of passengers,  
4 the density that's coming through to spread that cost  
5 across. But we're -- about 60 percent of the costs are the  
6 ones that do not vary with mileage.

7           This one is a little bit more complicated.  
8 It's not clear-cut at all. When we are going through and  
9 monitoring competitive actions, we look not only in the  
10 local marketplace that's directly affected; but we also  
11 recognize there is mobility between airports.

12           And what we've tried to do here is depict some  
13 of the circles of influence just to give you some idea.  
14 When we look at Harrisburg pricing, we do look at the, the  
15 effect of the fares out of Baltimore as well as the  
16 Readings and the Lancasters.

17           When we're looking at Pittsburgh, we do look  
18 at what's going on in Cleveland. And the one point I would  
19 like to make here, though, is that as we look at some of  
20 these, these markets, there are factors other than fares  
21 that affect people driving from one city to another to  
22 catch a service.

23           For example, in the case of Harrisburg to  
24 Orlando versus Baltimore to Orlando, if you looked at the  
25 fares, the fare levels are the same. But in the case of

1 Baltimore, you have 11 nonstop flights, 7 by US Airways, 4  
2 by Southwest. In the case of Harrisburg, we provide, US  
3 Airways provides service, nonstop service only on the  
4 weekend.

5           So you do see a reasonable number of people  
6 driving to Baltimore even though the fares are exactly the  
7 same. And they're driving because of the service  
8 considerations. This goes back to the traffic density I  
9 gave you. You can provide more flights. Thus, you can  
10 provide more service; and passengers are going to take  
11 advantage of it.

12           Representative Petrarca was talking about the  
13 markets of Pittsburgh and Cleveland and how many of the  
14 people are driving from Pittsburgh to Cleveland. We're  
15 very aware of that. We see clippings coming in from the  
16 Pittsburgh papers all the time talking about this great  
17 exodus of passengers.

18           We measure the diversion, as we call it,  
19 between cities by monitoring the computer reservation  
20 systems made in Pittsburgh for passengers going out of  
21 Cleveland. And we can do the same thing for passengers, or  
22 agencies in Cleveland with passengers going out of  
23 Pittsburgh.

24           We've measured this a number of times over the  
25 past five or six years. And each time, Pittsburgh ends up

1 in the favorable position. There really is very little  
2 diversion. In one case, it's about 6 1/2 percent of the  
3 passengers going from Cleveland to use Pittsburgh and about  
4 5 1/2 percent going from Pittsburgh to use Cleveland.

5           So the diversion numbers are low. But in each  
6 case, Pittsburgh has come out in a more favorable position.  
7 And probably one of the reasons it's come out is I've just  
8 alluded to the service considerations. You saw before that  
9 the Pittsburgh hub receives almost 500 departures a day.  
10 It's a bigger hub than Cleveland. But we do track through  
11 these things, and we watch. And it's certainly not an  
12 exact science. And we try to monitor the activities and  
13 maximize the revenue contribution.

14           Turning from these macro elements, I'm sure  
15 one of the questions that was, or one of the questions that  
16 was brought up before and one of the things we'd like to  
17 address is this whole issue of Southwest and why they can  
18 charge fares that they do versus why the network carriers  
19 like US Airways charge the fares that they do.

20           And in going through this, certainly the  
21 concept of market density comes into play very strongly.  
22 If you looked at Southwest and you looked at US Airways on  
23 a system basis, we both enplane roughly the same number of  
24 passengers. If you look at US Airways and you include our  
25 express operations, we're about 66 1/2 million last year.

1 Southwest would be 63.7.

2           If you took our express operations out, you  
3 take about 8 million out. So we'd be somewhere in the high  
4 50's. So we're roughly the same enplanement levels that  
5 your networks are. But now as you start to look at the  
6 number of airports that are served to generate those  
7 enplanement levels, as you can see, Southwest serves only  
8 59 airports.

9           US Airways, on the other hand, serves 172. If  
10 we start to break down the composition of those and start  
11 to look again at the concept of density coming through, you  
12 look at those communities that are served with a population  
13 of over 500,000. Over 80 percent of the Southwest airports  
14 fall under that category. Only 42 percent of US Airways'  
15 system meets that criteria.

16           Going down one step further, Southwest has 17  
17 percent of their cities, or their airports in the 500,000  
18 to 200,000 range. And they have none, they have none under  
19 200,000. Thirty-one percent of US Airways' airports on the  
20 system basis have populations of under 200,000.

21           And if we profile Pennsylvania, it becomes  
22 even more dramatic. Six of the 16 fall into the under  
23 200,000 category. And if you look at the under 500,000  
24 category, you're looking at almost 70 percent of the city  
25 pairs in Pennsylvania under 500,000.

1           So I think this goes part of the way in  
2 explaining why Southwest, it's one of the factors in  
3 explaining why Southwest can charge the fares that it does.  
4 And if I move on and I look at costs, this becomes an even  
5 more powerful chart.

6           Southwest, very efficient airline. They have  
7 a single fleet type. They have simplified work rules. And  
8 the net effect of all these things is they can produce a  
9 seat mile at about 7.7 cents. US Airways, on the other  
10 hand, on a domestic system is 14.7 cents.

11           And one of the things is I have not adjusted  
12 these for stage length. The example for Southwest, the 7.7  
13 cents is at 485 miles. The US Airways' stage length is  
14 588. They are going to adjust that so they both be  
15 comparable. US Airways' cost would be even higher.

16           So you'd be looking at a cost that would  
17 probably be in the 16 to 17 cent range to be a direct  
18 comparison to Southwest. So our costs are more than double  
19 theirs. But in going through and looking at the profile  
20 and the service patterns of Southwest, as I noted, one of  
21 the things they do is they do rely on the height density in  
22 the communities that they serve.

23           They also relied on another factor. They rely  
24 on drive from neighboring communities. I think if you're  
25 going to draw an analogy, you can probably use the Wal-Mart

1 effect where Wal-Mart comes into an area; and because of  
2 their incredible purchasing economies, they're able to set  
3 up a store and charge prices that are much lower than the  
4 local retailers.

5           And people will drive from distances around to  
6 be able to take advantage of the prices that Wal-Mart  
7 charges. The local retailers don't have the economies and  
8 can't match the prices. So they face the same dilemma in  
9 many, in many ways that US Airways faces in competing with  
10 Southwest.

11           And I think as you go through and you look at  
12 the Southwest formula when they come in, a very successful  
13 formula, if you were the city that they select to serve,  
14 it's a very nice day for you. If you're one of the  
15 neighboring communities that doesn't get selected, then  
16 you're going to see traffic that originally boarded at your  
17 airport driving to the Southwest airport to use their  
18 services. So not everyone wins in the equation. There are  
19 some losers here.

20           Let me move on now to another issue that came  
21 up. And that concerns the fares at Pittsburgh and  
22 Philadelphia versus comparable hubs. When I say comparable  
23 hubs, those are going to compare Pittsburgh to Cincinnati  
24 and Cleveland. And when you start to do fare comparisons,  
25 it can get very complicated.



1           So what I've done here is I've selected only  
2 the business fares. And we've looked at those cities  
3 within the top 25 population count of the United States.  
4 And since we're comparing ourselves, US Airways, to Delta  
5 in the case of Cincinnati, Continental in the case of  
6 Cleveland, we've removed those city pairs that are impacted  
7 by low fare competition.

8           So we're saying in these cities where US  
9 Airways competes against Continental or Delta, the other  
10 two full service network carriers, how do the fares in  
11 Pittsburgh on a rate per mile basis stack up with Delta and  
12 Continental? And the fares stack up fairly successfully.

13           As you can see, Pittsburgh is slightly lower  
14 than Cleveland and a little bit lower than Cincinnati. And  
15 to reinforce this, I think the Pittsburgh Airport asked the  
16 same question or they had the same concerns. And they  
17 brought in an independent consultant, Boyd Group from  
18 Evergreen, Colorado.

19           And I think if you look through the Boyd Group  
20 Study, you'll find that they drew exactly the same  
21 conclusions. That was Pittsburgh. Let me move to, to  
22 Philadelphia where we're comparing Philadelphia and Newark.  
23 Using the same criteria that I did before, you can see that  
24 they're virtually identical.

25           So for the Commonwealth's two major hubs or

1 the two hubs, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, when you look at  
2 comparable-sized hubs, the fares of network carriers are  
3 roughly the same. Okay. Let me move on now to the next  
4 area, which I'm sure is of concern.

5           And that involves some of the DOT studies  
6 which show a relatively high average fare per mile for  
7 Pittsburgh. And as we go through and look at this and  
8 analyze what's in back of these numbers, there's really two  
9 factors that are driving this analysis.

10           One is the mix, the mix between business and  
11 leisure fares. And the second is the cities that are  
12 included in the sample that the DOT constructs. And when  
13 you look at mix, I know it's probably a blinding close-up  
14 of the obvious; but business fares are higher than leisure  
15 fares.

16           The business passenger requires flexibility.  
17 He wants to have refundability so he can change his  
18 itineraries, and he also requires last-minute seat  
19 availability. So we have to basically save seats for him.  
20 There's a risk associated with that. His seat may go  
21 unused, and there's a loss of revenue.

22           So on a broad basis, the, certainly the  
23 business fares do tend to be higher than leisure fares. So  
24 if I can just go through and perhaps illustrate the impact  
25 of mix on these. We have two destinations, two

1 destinations, A and B.

2           The leisure fares are almost the same.  
3 Business fares, B is higher than A. So one would  
4 reasonably expect that when you look at the average fare or  
5 the DOT fare that comes up, that B would probably be  
6 higher. Not really the case.

7           In one case, A is Pittsburgh-Minneapolis. And  
8 you can see the yellow portion at the top is the percentage  
9 of business traffic using that fare versus the much smaller  
10 amount in the market like Orlando. And when you rate the  
11 two out, the Orlando market comes out of an average fare of  
12 \$129 versus the \$153 for Pittsburgh-Minneapolis. So mix is  
13 a very important part of the equation.

14           The other one is the market selection that I  
15 referred to that's included. In constructing the charts,  
16 the Department of Transportation goes through the top 1,000  
17 domestic markets. Of those 1,000 top domestic markets, 26  
18 of those involve Pittsburgh.

19           When you look at the 26 and categorize them  
20 between business and leisure and perhaps mix, which would  
21 be a component of both, it's heavily weighted towards the  
22 business side. Of 14 or over half of them in business,  
23 probably 5 in mix and 7 leisure.

24           So when you factor these two things together,  
25 the mix of business/leisure and the preponderance of

1 business markets versus leisure markets, Pittsburgh ranks  
2 fairly high. And I think that makes a lot of sense when  
3 you think about Pittsburgh being a major headquarter city  
4 for Fortune 1,000 companies.

5           At one time, I think it was actually third. I  
6 think it's a little bit lower now. But it certainly is a  
7 major commerce center. And as we go through this, I think  
8 one of the things that happens is it's, you get caught up  
9 in low fares. And it's easy to get mesmerized with the  
10 velour fares.

11           But there are certain, a lot of benefits that  
12 accrue to communities as a result of a network, network  
13 operation or network carrier like US Airways. And one of  
14 the things that you get or residents in the Commonwealth  
15 get is that in places like Williamsport, if you want to go  
16 to Los Angeles, you have services of two hubs.

17           You have eight options throughout the day from  
18 6:00 in the morning to 6:00 at night to be able to make  
19 connections going from Williamsport to Los Angeles. And  
20 one other one, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton to Orlando. If I  
21 wanted to look at this, nine connections afforded by the  
22 two hubs.

23           So all in all, while, you know, I'm sure some  
24 of the fares are certainly not at the levels that you would  
25 like to see or that we would like to charge, there are

1 benefits that accrue in the state to the Commonwealth as a  
2 result of the service of a network carrier. Thank you.

3 MR. HAZEL: I'd just like to add a few words  
4 on the subject of airport access because in our view,  
5 airport access is not a cause of or related to any fare  
6 disparity issues that this Committee may look at. And let  
7 me just discuss that subject briefly.

8 Starting first with Pittsburgh International  
9 and putting aside the question of why there are long-term  
10 leases there and why they were in fact needed to sell the  
11 bonds. The simple fact is that there are at least 10  
12 available empty gates in Pittsburgh. And that's according  
13 to the airport director's own statement.

14 So to spend time on the subject of whether new  
15 entrants can get access to Pittsburgh is, makes no sense.  
16 There are 10 gates ready and available today. We serve 16  
17 airports in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. And let's  
18 talk about Philadelphia last because it's the most  
19 complicated.

20 But I think if you asked the airport directors  
21 of any of the remaining 14 whether there are any  
22 difficulties in an airline gaining access to a gate at  
23 those airports, the answers will be uniformly no. The  
24 gates are available. And I would submit to you that no  
25 airline that has ever sought to serve any airport in this

1 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has ever been denied access.

2 But let's now turn to Philadelphia, which is  
3 the most complicated situation. The fact is that  
4 Philadelphia is a congested airport. It has -- its  
5 airfield is limited, and its gates are limited. The  
6 airport is adding new gates; therefore, new gates to be  
7 opened at the end of this year.

8 Those will all be under airport control.  
9 There are 38 commuter gates that are opening in June.  
10 Those will all be under airport control. We hope to use  
11 most of the commuter gates, but they're all under airport  
12 control.

13 There's a new international terminal opening  
14 next year with 12 wide-body gates, again all under airport  
15 control. But then let's add to that. We're all sort of  
16 paying the price in Philadelphia equally. We're adding new  
17 international flights, but there's no room for our flights  
18 to get access to a gate.

19 So what do we do? Our flights harp on the  
20 hardstand, and our passengers take a vehicle in the form of  
21 a bus to the terminal. So to suggest that we are not  
22 suffering as much as anyone else is simply not the case.  
23 AirTran, AirTran will testify tomorrow. AirTran may say it  
24 was difficult to get into Philadelphia.

25 The fact of the matter is AirTran is at

1 Philadelphia. AirTran has expanded service since starting  
2 in Philadelphia. And no new entrant, to our knowledge, has  
3 been denied access. But it is a congested airport, and it  
4 is a tough situation.

5           And frankly, if there were more gates, our  
6 schedule would be different as well. But, you know, we're  
7 dealing with a resource that's being shared and I think  
8 being shared fairly. So that's, those are my comments on  
9 airport access.

10           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you. I'm sure  
11 Representative McGill will have a couple of questions on  
12 Philadelphia Airport as he usually does. On the -- isn't  
13 the issue with the gates, as I understand it, that yes,  
14 some gates may be available; but it's like, it's like  
15 somebody having a business at a good position along a  
16 roadway; that there are better gates, and then there are  
17 fair gates, and then there are poor gates as far as  
18 attracting consumers?

19           MR. HAZEL: Well, I think in Pittsburgh, first  
20 of all, they're all good gates. The airport was opened in  
21 1992. At one time, there was one rental rate. You could  
22 be a little further from the core or a little bit closer.  
23 But the fact of the matter is, the gates available are  
24 pretty close to the air side core.

25           So in Pittsburgh, you certainly could not draw

1 the conclusion.

2 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: So Southwest Airlines  
3 could come into Pittsburgh --

4 MR. HAZEL: Absolutely.

5 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: -- and say I  
6 understand you have 15 gates available and we would like to  
7 negotiate with you for all those?

8 MR. HAZEL: Absolutely. And I can assure you  
9 that the Pittsburgh Airport director has invited Southwest  
10 to do just that.

11 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Like everyone.

12 MR. HAZEL: And AirTran started service to  
13 Pittsburgh. And one other thing I'd point out is if you  
14 notice the first three markets they selected, New York,  
15 Chicago, and Atlanta, what sort of markets are they  
16 picking? Well, they're exactly the markets that my  
17 colleague suggested they would pick, the biggest markets.

18 And that's another thing we need to be  
19 conscious of when we're talking about fares. There really  
20 is a difference in the fares that are charged in high  
21 density markets versus very small markets.

22 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: On the testimony  
23 concerning the, what I call the commuter airlines, the  
24 connector airlines from the, some of the smaller airports  
25 in Pennsylvania, are they all US Airway owned; or are they



1 subcontracted?

2 MR. HARIG: No. They're not all alone. We  
3 own three. And the others that operate are independent.  
4 They're subcontractors per se. And what that means, what  
5 you might be getting at in terms of pricing, setting rates  
6 in the local market, if we own that carrier, we will set  
7 the prices.

8 If they're independent and just operating  
9 under the US Airways' banner for that market, then they set  
10 the local rate there.

11 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: I've been -- one  
12 airport director mentioned a problem with a subcontracted  
13 carrier who said that basically their hands were tied  
14 because when they got from point A, meaning that smaller  
15 airport, to the hub airport, they still had fixed costs  
16 that they felt were pretty high compared to the industry  
17 standards which put them at a competitive disadvantage.

18 They had no choice in the matter. If you want  
19 the contract, there it is. You pay our price when you get  
20 there using our baggage service, our ramp service, fuel  
21 service, et cetera.

22 MR. HARIG: I really wouldn't know how to  
23 comment on what industry standard is on things like that.  
24 I, I just couldn't comment on that.

25 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: But you -- I mean,

1 just so I understand that relationship, you would be  
2 contracting to them for the right to use your facilities  
3 and operate under your banner. Is that how it works?

4 MR. HARIG: They would pay a fee to use our  
5 facilities and the US Airways name, yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: All right. There's  
7 been a -- from the traveling public, there's been a lot of  
8 questions on people that call the airport and say, Gee  
9 whiz, I saw in the paper or I saw on the Internet or  
10 whatever that these fantastic rates were advertised.

11 Then they call their travel agent. And all of  
12 a sudden, no, there's no seats available. And they say,  
13 yeah, the rates, that's good. But there were only X amount  
14 of allocated seats for that flight under, that pertained to  
15 this rate.

16 Is that person, are these people leading us  
17 astray? Or how many flights -- when you advertise for low  
18 rates, how many seats are allocated for that? And how does  
19 the flying public know that they're not getting scammed  
20 somehow in this deal? And obviously, I'm not picking on US  
21 Air. But it's industry-wide.

22 MR. HARIG: There really isn't a fixed number  
23 that are set. But what we do do before we offer and  
24 advertise any city pair, any fare and any city pair, we go  
25 through the exercise to make sure that there is adequate

1 availability because if we don't, we have the DOT watching.  
2 And the Department of Transportation Bureau of Enforcement  
3 does get involved in these issues.

4           So we're very careful that before we offer  
5 that, that the, that there's adequate seats available.  
6 Now, it could be that what's happening is that if they're  
7 coming in at the end of the sale, maybe the flight, a  
8 particular flight they want may not be available, when in  
9 fact everything is sold out. So it might be a question of  
10 timing when they come in.

11           MR. HAZEL: One of the areas that the federal  
12 government does get involved in obviously is deceptive  
13 practices and fair treatment of consumers, and they look at  
14 this area. And I just want to go back to a statement that  
15 another testifier made, which was that there are no  
16 guarantees of access to airports.

17           That is also in the federal legislation, the  
18 Aviation Act. It requires federal government to assure  
19 that there's nondiscriminatory treatment of carriers and  
20 that there are fair and reasonable access to them. And I  
21 think -- so there's a variety of regulatory work in this  
22 area.

23           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: What I'm trying to  
24 understand is just -- I think I've got it. But if you have  
25 a, an airplane with 180 seats -- I'll pull 180 out of the

1 air -- and a low fare is advertised, does that now, does  
2 that apply for the whole economy class, business class?

3 I mean, obviously, it wouldn't apply to the  
4 business and first class, I guess. But where does  
5 it -- how many seats out of the 180 would it apply to?

6 MR. HARIG: Well, I can't give you a hard and  
7 fast answer to that because it depends upon the other  
8 demand we expect on the flight. It will be a reasonable  
9 number. It probably won't be the whole back compartment,  
10 or that's an exceptionally weak flight.

11 So it would be a reasonable portion of that  
12 compartment would have seats available. We'd also look at  
13 it on a --

14 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: When you say the back  
15 portion, you're talking about the economy?

16 MR. HARIG: Coach. Right.

17 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Well, how does -- I  
18 mean, it seems to me like, wait a minute. You have out of  
19 that back section -- let's use 90. Let's cut the plane in  
20 half. It seems to me that out of that 90, let's say 50  
21 percent of those took care, or took advantage of that low  
22 rate. What about the other 50 percent?

23 Did they not know about the rate, or was it  
24 just arbitrarily set that we're only going to allow 50  
25 percent of this flight to take advantage of the low rate?

1 So the other 50 percent you say the hell with you.

2 MR. HARIG: I don't know if we'd say the hell  
3 with you. I think the way we normally do these things --

4 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: It sounds like it.

5 MR. HARIG: Not quite. The way we do these  
6 things is we would start with the demand for the higher  
7 revenue business passengers and allocate down from that.  
8 So that when you get down to the sale, you'd be looking at  
9 seats that we expect that would go, would normally go empty  
10 as a result of this.

11 Those would be the ones that would be  
12 available for sale. So that if you had a flight going from  
13 Pittsburgh to Los Angeles at 8 o'clock in the morning,  
14 there may be fewer seats there than there are on the flight  
15 that's at 8 o'clock at night because the inherent demand  
16 for the morning flight is going to be stronger.

17 So there may be 20 flights in the morning, 20  
18 seats in the morning flight, 50 seats on the evening  
19 flight. So it varies by time of day, by market, and  
20 everything else. But the check is made. Before we do the  
21 advertising, before we advertise that sale fare in any  
22 market, there has to be a reasonable number of seats  
23 available for consumers to get.

24 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: When you're  
25 advertising them, why don't you list the times if that's

1 the case? I mean, I call my travel agent and I say get me  
2 a ticket, lowest fare. I don't care what time I fly. And  
3 she comes back and says, There isn't any low fare. They're  
4 all taken.

5 I see in my newspaper, it says fly to San  
6 Francisco for \$150. But it doesn't say when I have to fly  
7 to San Francisco. It doesn't tell me the percentage of  
8 availability that I might expect as a consumer reading that  
9 paper.

10 MR. HARIG: But it would be difficult for us  
11 to advertise availability because that's going to change  
12 every day that the sale goes on. So if we put a number in  
13 there before the sale started that 20 percent of the seats  
14 are available at that fare level, the second day half of  
15 those might be gone.

16 So the advertising, if you picked up the paper  
17 the second day, would immediately be misleading. So it's  
18 difficult to do. We just have to make sure at the  
19 beginning of the process that there are seats available in  
20 these markets.

21 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Well, it seems to me  
22 if you want to fill flights, if that's your, if that's your  
23 intention, you already know, you already know what seats  
24 are vacant and what flights need assistance. And it seems  
25 to me if you're going to do that, in order to fill those

1 flights, it would be very easy to tell the flying public,  
2 Hey, if you want to fly, we offer these rates at this time  
3 and this is the reason we're doing it. I'm not going to  
4 belabor the point.

5 MR. HAZEL: It's actually not all that simple  
6 because we don't know in terms of business demand, which we  
7 want to put the full fare business travelers' needs first.  
8 Those needs keep changing day by day. And so the whole  
9 thing is really, really does change every day.

10 If the business demand turns out to be  
11 unexpectedly high or unexpectedly low, we would then change  
12 the other categories.

13 MR. HARIG: The other thing --

14 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Wait a minute. Could  
15 I -- let me just do a follow-up.

16 MR. HARIG: Sure. I'm sorry.

17 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: What do you mean  
18 they're changed every day? So every day -- if I'm a  
19 consumer looking for the best rate, my best deal is to call  
20 the, your airline every day because it's going to change  
21 every day?

22 MR. HAZEL: The rate won't necessarily change  
23 every day. But the number of seats available may shrink or  
24 grow, depending on what the demand is in the other  
25 category. If we're advertising a flight that's going to

1 leave Saturday and we're advertising it two weeks in  
2 advance, okay, our goal is to, is to leave enough seats for  
3 that last-minute business traveler.

4 Well, what happens if there are more business  
5 travelers who sign up before the flight leaves? There has  
6 to be an adjustment in the other categories. It really is,  
7 it really is a situation that changes.

8 MR. HARIG: But if I might --

9 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Well, go ahead.

10 MR. HARIG: To address your point, one of the  
11 things that our reservation agents have, tools that they  
12 have is to be able to go through and do fare searches; that  
13 if you're looking for the \$150 fare, they should be able to  
14 very quickly be able to go in and tell you which flights  
15 that fare is available on when they go through the search.

16 When you call up US Airways reservations, I'm  
17 looking for a \$150 fare --

18 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: What if I just called  
19 and said -- because, you know, I don't fly that often. I  
20 don't know what a -- I say I'm looking for the lowest fare  
21 and I want to leave in two weeks. Can I do that? And is  
22 it their responsibility to point out the lowest fare?

23 MR. HARIG: If you give them that itinerary,  
24 it's their responsibility to go through and find out the  
25 lowest fare that would be available.



1                   CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: And that kind of --

2                   MR. HARIG: When you say give me the lowest  
3 fare for this, you're specifying that, right, I want the  
4 lowest fare on this itinerary?

5                   CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: I want the lowest  
6 fare, and I don't want to go to six cities to go from here  
7 to Cleveland.

8                   MR. HAZEL: We are required to give you the  
9 lowest fare, absolutely.

10                  CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: And for the flying  
11 public, what's the best way to find out? I mean, is it to  
12 call the -- do you recommend calling the airlines directly  
13 or your travel agent? How am I, how am I kept abreast of  
14 these fares?

15                  Sometimes I think some travel agents just do a  
16 wonderful job. And others, I'm not sure they're quite up  
17 to what's really going on. And then I've heard rumors that  
18 others are connected through different promotions with  
19 different, be it cruise ships, airlines, et cetera, that  
20 sometimes they're more than likely to guide you one way or  
21 the other. Any thoughts or suggestions?

22                  MR. HARIG: Well, you should be able to go to  
23 either, you know, a well-trained travel agent or US Airways  
24 reservations. You can also look through some of the  
25 electronic media, something like Travelocity or Expedia.

1 And if you were looking for the very, very best ways, you  
2 would probably subscribe to what we call our E-savers,  
3 which are, you know, the last-minute fares. You go out on  
4 a Saturday, come back on a Sunday, Monday, or Tuesday.

5 So there are Internet specials that run from  
6 time to time, too. So there's a number of avenues in going  
7 between either reservations, a good travel agent, Internet.

8 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: We can really go into  
9 that Internet. I understand there's some problems there  
10 that -- well, some of the problems, if I remember  
11 correctly, is that you can get the best price; but they  
12 didn't tell you that it takes three stops to get there and  
13 change planes and that type of thing. Let's let that one  
14 go in the interest of time.

15 On the issue of the merger, from a purely  
16 consumer perspective, will the cost of flying, in your  
17 opinion, whether it be intrastate or interstate, go up or  
18 down for the flying Pennsylvania public if the merger takes  
19 place?

20 MR. HARIG: That's pretty difficult to answer.  
21 I think the way I can answer that best is that what the  
22 merger would do would ensure service throughout the  
23 Commonwealth because the commitment has been made that  
24 United will retain all the service to all the communities  
25 or continue serving all the communities.

1           As far as commenting on the future, that would  
2 be very difficult for me to do.

3           MR. HAZEL: There is, as you know, a guarantee  
4 by United that fares will not increase for a two-year  
5 period of the CPI. So there is that commitment going in.  
6 And there's also a commitment to retain service in all  
7 existing markets.

8           As Gary said, there's another issue, which is  
9 that with United's acquisition of US Airways, there's a  
10 long-term viable carrier in these markets. And while I  
11 would think the same factors would affect fares as affect  
12 fares today, you have the confidence that there's a, you  
13 know, a world-class large mega carrier now serving these  
14 markets.

15           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: When you say the  
16 guarantee that the rates will not increase within two  
17 years, is that based on the advertised fares at what  
18 particular point in time? And can the consumer get a copy  
19 of that, or can this committee get a copy of that?

20           MR. HAZEL: That's based on what United calls  
21 structured fares, which Gary can explain to you. And as of  
22 a certain date -- I believe it's as of the date that the  
23 merger closes -- and that those fares are all publicly  
24 available. And there would be I don't know how many  
25 thousands of them; but there are many, many thousands of

1 them.

2 But that is certainly something that can be  
3 verified and tracked. It's not --

4 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Quickly, what is the  
5 structured fare as compared to an actual fare that I --

6 MR. HARIG: The structured fare would be your  
7 basic 7-, 14-, or 21-day excursion fares as an example, a  
8 Saturday night stay. Now, in addition to those, which are  
9 guaranteed not to rise, you still can have sales coming in  
10 below that. So there is that element.

11 It's just that those fares are locked in and  
12 you're not going to go above those. And the same way as to  
13 the business fares, the Y fare and the B fare. Those are  
14 structured fares, and they're locked in.

15 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: So a structured fare  
16 is a fare that normally I would pay given a 7-, 14-, or  
17 21-day --

18 MR. HARIG: Those are the fares that are there  
19 all the time. They don't go in and out like sale fares do.  
20 So those are the ones that are in the market all the time.

21 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Okay. Let me ask it  
22 this way: What percent of flying customers pay the  
23 structured fare?

24 MR. HARIG: I don't know. I'd have to get  
25 back to you. It would just be speculating. Probably 35 to

1 40 percent. Somewhere in that range, I believe.

2 MR. HAZEL: As a percentage of revenue?

3 MR. HARIG: As a percentage of revenue, it  
4 would probably be higher. It would probably be in the 50  
5 percent range.

6 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: No. I was just  
7 looking at the percentage of flyers, not percentage of  
8 revenue.

9 MR. HARIG: Right. That's an estimate.

10 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: And what was the final  
11 answer?

12 MR. HARIG: I think in terms of passengers,  
13 about 35 percent, somewhere in that area. In terms of  
14 revenue, then it would be more.

15 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you.  
16 Representative Levdansky.

17 REPRESENTATIVE LEVDANSKY: Thank you. Thank  
18 you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make sure. Just kind of  
19 a long-term historical view of the industry. Airline  
20 deregulation happened in 1978, I believe. Before that, how  
21 many major air carriers did we have in the United States?

22 MR. HARIG: About eight or ten probably.

23 REPRESENTATIVE LEVDANSKY: About eight or ten?  
24 And today --

25 MR. HARIG: And today?

1                   REPRESENTATIVE LEVDANSKY: And today, we have  
2 what, United, American, Delta, Northwest, Continental, US  
3 Air, Southwest, TWA? So we have eight now. So --

4                   MR. HARIG: America West in Alaska.

5                   REPRESENTATIVE LEVDANSKY: Pardon me?

6                   MR. HARIG: America West in Alaska.

7                   REPRESENTATIVE LEVDANSKY: Okay. So we have  
8 nine or ten major airlines today. We had nine or ten major  
9 airlines before we passed deregulation, which was designed  
10 to spur competition in the industry. And I think most  
11 people would say that for at least a period of a decade, it  
12 certainly did that.

13                   I mean, there was a growth in airlines,  
14 passenger miles, everything. But I'm just wondering now, I  
15 mean, if these two mergers go through, we're going to end  
16 up with six major airlines in this country, six. Now, it  
17 just seems to me -- I'm not an expert on this. You all  
18 are -- we're going from a period of maybe, you know,  
19 pre-'78 where we had, you know, about ten major airlines.

20                   And after these two mergers, we're going to  
21 have six major airlines with fewer airlines servicing  
22 basically the same country. I mean, if one's really pro  
23 competition, it doesn't really seem like there's a whole  
24 lot of competition. Or is the result of all this  
25 deregulation simply to reconsolidate the industry? Is that

1 what's happened?

2 MR. HARIG: Well, I think it's a number of  
3 things. I think when you, when you look at the industry,  
4 we are a young industry. As you pointed out, since  
5 deregulation, we're about 20 years old. And as most  
6 industries do, you go through a period of consolidation.

7 And I don't think the airlines are any  
8 different than that. And whether it's this year or five  
9 years from now, I think that's going to happen one way or  
10 another. We think that one of the benefits of having it  
11 happen now is the orderliness of the process; that you have  
12 United taking over US Airways in a very strong position,  
13 kind of like letting things deteriorate till you get to a  
14 point that perhaps you have another TWA situation where  
15 they're at a precarious point.

16 US Airways finds itself in a somewhat unique  
17 position. You know, we're certainly not the low fare  
18 carriers that you saw; and we're not the major global  
19 airline. We're basically, like, the last. There have been  
20 six midsize carriers.

21 And we're about the last of the six that  
22 hasn't either disappeared -- Braniff, Pan Am, and Eastern  
23 have gone through bankruptcy multiple times, Continental  
24 and TWA. So we're the last ones in that grouping. And  
25 when you say mergers, mergers, I think it's pretty obvious

1 that they are going to happen.

2           And this is probably the orderly process. But  
3 I think that what you have to look at as well when you talk  
4 about reducing the number of carriers, that communities may  
5 actually have more service by more carriers than they do  
6 today. For example, if you had Burlington, Vermont with  
7 one carrier serving it, you may have two or three.

8           Instead of in addition to United, you may have  
9 American and somebody else coming in. So you're building  
10 stronger network carriers. So communities may actually  
11 have more service than they do today.

12           MR. HAZEL: I don't know if you're viewers of  
13 the auto industry. But clearly, there are far fewer auto  
14 companies today than there used to be. And I would tell  
15 you that auto executives believe they're a fiercely  
16 competitive industry.

17           We mentioned maybe eight major carriers. We  
18 all know there are not eight major carriers serving any one  
19 route anywhere. You know, you need two competitors going  
20 head to head to have real competition. And that's what we  
21 believe.

22           We still -- and in our markets, we see more  
23 competition all the time. We see, we see Southwest coming  
24 into the East Coast. We see Delta Express. We see AirTran  
25 coming back very strong. We see JetBlue. So if you look



1 at the eastern part of the United States, we see increased  
2 competition all the time.

3 And that in fact is one reason why we are, as  
4 the last of the midsize carriers, under pressure. It's  
5 exactly for that reason.

6 REPRESENTATIVE LEVDANSKY: I'm just always,  
7 you know -- we policymakers, you know, engage in these  
8 discussions a lot about competition and whatnot. And we  
9 passed the laws to deregulate. But in the end, the  
10 consumer practically never -- I mean, long term -- I know  
11 there's some short-term benefits to consumers. But long  
12 term, consumer prices, you know, go back up.

13 I mean, look at it in telecommunications.  
14 Look at it in trucking, you know. Look at it in almost any  
15 industry. I mean, there's a lot of -- we talk of all the  
16 benefits of competition. But I just think long term, I  
17 don't know the cost to consumers are any less.

18 I appreciate what you said about the  
19 comparison with the auto industry. But I would submit to  
20 you that the auto industry acted like a monopoly for a lot  
21 of decades until the Japanese figured out how to send cars  
22 into our market. Then they had real competition.

23 The same thing with the steel industry. We  
24 have fewer steel companies today in our nation, but they're  
25 more subject and prone to competition from steel produced

1 in other countries.

2 And, you know, I remember when deregulation  
3 started. I worked for the airline pilots. And US Air was  
4 one of the young upstart airlines. So was Continental and  
5 a couple of others. And you're right. You know, the  
6 Braniffs and the Easterns have gone, have gone away. But I  
7 just wanted -- we just don't change one company, you know,  
8 for another.

9 And I hear what you're saying in terms of it  
10 provides service. And certainly, that would be a benefit.  
11 That generally tends to be a benefit of having very strong  
12 large corporations. You do tend to get better service.  
13 But I just think that sometimes comes at the price of maybe  
14 lower, you know, more competition over pricing.

15 But that's just my general observation. But,  
16 you know, I'm not sure. I'm from the Pittsburgh area. I  
17 don't know whether this is going to work out, you know, to  
18 the benefit of the consumer. But certainly, you know,  
19 we're all looking to help US Air in Southwestern  
20 Pennsylvania because you do, you make substantial  
21 commitment and investment to that airport.

22 And that's not something we're going to walk  
23 away from or forget either.

24 MR. HARIG: Thank you.

25 REPRESENTATIVE LEVDANSKY: Thank you.

1                   CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Representative  
2 Petrarca.

3                   REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Thank you, Chairman.  
4 A few quick questions. And I'm sorry I missed part of your  
5 testimony when I was out in the hall. You apparently  
6 mentioned Cleveland and said there's not a problem. Or  
7 what exactly was that?

8                   MR. HARIG: No. I said we measure the amount  
9 of traffic that's going from Pittsburgh to Cleveland and  
10 from Cleveland to Pittsburgh, and we've measured it over a  
11 number of period of times. And each time, we find that  
12 Pittsburgh has a slight premium, that there is more people  
13 coming from Cleveland to Pittsburgh than there are from,  
14 going from Pittsburgh to Cleveland.

15                   REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: And do you know  
16 how -- how do you, how do you measure that in terms of from  
17 Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh area, Southwestern  
18 Pennsylvania --

19                   MR. HARIG: We'll take the agencies that use  
20 the computer reservation systems in Pittsburgh, and we'll  
21 do the same for Cleveland. So we look at the agencies in  
22 Pittsburgh that are driving tickets for people going out of  
23 Cleveland. And then we'll do the same.

24                   We'll look at those agencies that are based in  
25 Cleveland driving tickets for people originating out of

1 Pittsburgh. And when we look at that mix, it's, I think it  
2 was about 6 1/2 percent of the Cleveland passengers are  
3 going out of Pittsburgh and about 5 1/2 percent, or  
4 something like that, of the Pittsburgh passengers are going  
5 out, are going out of Cleveland.

6           So we tracked that over a period. We don't  
7 just do it at one point in time, but we watch the trend to  
8 see what's happening. And we've looked at it over a number  
9 of years. And each time, we have seen that because we see  
10 the newspaper clippings coming through. And it's been a  
11 concern in the Pittsburgh area for people driving out  
12 there. So we're concerned as well.

13           REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: I know there are  
14 substantial cost savings for folks that seem to go out of  
15 Cleveland. Whatever that percentage is, I must -- can you  
16 tell me regarding the Pittsburgh Airport -- I'm from  
17 Western Pennsylvania also -- can you tell me what, what the  
18 length of the lease is out there regarding the gates?

19           MR. HAZEL: The lease runs till 2018, and the  
20 bonds were sold in 1988. And in order to sell bonds,  
21 30-year bonds for that airport, it was necessary to sign a  
22 30-year lease. And as I've said before, there are ten  
23 empty gates waiting for an airline in Pittsburgh.

24           REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: The gates, the gates  
25 that US Air controls, are all those gates used, every one

1 of those gates? Or are you in effect -- as was alluded to  
2 earlier, in some areas an airline will hold the gates and  
3 no one uses them and no one else can --

4 MR. HAZEL: All of our hubs are being used.  
5 Now, some of them are being used for regional jets as  
6 opposed to mainline jets or Dash 8's. But absolutely every  
7 one is being used.

8 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: I have a couple  
9 other quick questions here. As we heard earlier, why does  
10 US Air have the poorest operating margin of the major  
11 airlines? Is there any quick answer to that?

12 MR. HARIG: I think the quick answer was what  
13 we touched on. We're neither the low cost nor the, you  
14 know, global route structure. And as Bob was referring to,  
15 we're seeing an increasing amount of competition coming  
16 into our traditional service area in the northeast, whether  
17 it be JetBlue or Southwestern, AirTran, much more and more  
18 competition from the, from the low fare carriers.

19 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Mr. Hazel, you said  
20 that, you referenced that there are ten open gates in  
21 Pittsburgh.

22 MR. HAZEL: Yes.

23 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Because there are  
24 ten open gates, does that mean that you guys would support  
25 and not oppose the shared gate access rules? If we in

1 Pennsylvania wanted to pass a law that wanted to open these  
2 gates, would you guys oppose that?

3 MR. HAZEL: Let me give you some background on  
4 this first. As new leases come up -- and Mr. Testa is more  
5 of an authority on this than I am. As new leases come up,  
6 there are very often, there is very often a conversion to  
7 what's called preferential use gates as opposed to  
8 exclusive use gates, which means my carrier gets to use  
9 them for a schedule.

10 But when we're not using them, someone else  
11 does. Or common use gates, in which case the airport just  
12 decides on its own who gets what gates when. And we  
13 routinely sign those new agreements. Now -- and --

14 REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Nothing like that  
15 exists in Pittsburgh, though, at this point?

16 MR. HAZEL: No. That was not the agreement in  
17 1988. And frankly -- although, I take that back. Fifteen  
18 percent of our gates in Pittsburgh are preferential use  
19 gates. The other 85 are exclusive use gates. So that in  
20 fact, if we are not using the 15 percent of our gates,  
21 which I believe is -- I'm sorry -- 7 I think, 7 or 8,  
22 another carrier is free to use those gates. There in fact  
23 is no reason for another carrier to use our gates because  
24 there's 10 available already.

25 I should also point out that the existing

1 commuter terminal is a common use terminal. You know, if  
2 worse comes to worse, the airport can put carriers in  
3 there. It's just not an issue there. But in many  
4 airports, we have adopted this different form of agreement  
5 which goes with a new lease.

6           And as I pointed out in Philadelphia, as new  
7 gates are built, the agreement changes. And as the  
8 existing agreement expires in 2006, I'm sure they'll go  
9 with some different form. And frankly, it won't be a big  
10 deal. So -- and, you know, Dulles is an example. There  
11 are many, many examples of this type of agreement.

12           And it's really not an issue. But it's not an  
13 issue in Pittsburgh because there's no need for it.

14           REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: One last question,  
15 Mr. Chairman. When Mr. Hudson from the advocacy group  
16 stated that Pennsylvania is becoming an item in terms of  
17 high cost air transportation, is that true? I mean, do you  
18 guys see that as being true; or is he wrong? I mean, is  
19 Pennsylvania something different in the northeast or in the  
20 Mid-Atlantic area?

21           MR. HAZEL: Mr. Harig went through his  
22 presentation which showed and, you know, compared  
23 Pittsburgh fares to Cleveland fares to Cincinnati fares to  
24 Philadelphia fares to Newark fares. And what we found is  
25 that when the Pittsburgh Airport did its own independent

1 study, they verified it.

2           Because we're from an airline, if we tell you  
3 our fares are competitive, you're going to say sure, sure,  
4 sure. But the independent experts will tell you the same  
5 thing. Pittsburgh is -- I mean, the Commonwealth of  
6 Pennsylvania is not an island by any means. It's subject  
7 to all the forces of competition that will affect the rest  
8 of the country. And the East Coast is particularly battle  
9 ground at the moment. And absolutely not.

10           REPRESENTATIVE PETRARCA: Okay. Thank you,  
11 Mr. Chairman.

12           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Representative McGill.

13           REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: Thank you very much.

14 I bet you know where this is going to go. You had  
15 mentioned, Mr. Harig, that using the Cleveland-Pittsburgh,  
16 those leaving from Pittsburgh to go to Cleveland, those  
17 coming back, the percentage was higher.

18           Is that the same case for Philadelphia, those  
19 leaving Philadelphia to go to another airport and not  
20 coming back?

21           MR. HARIG: I would have to check. The amount  
22 of -- it depends how you measure Philadelphia. That's a  
23 little bit more difficult. If you look at the city area  
24 itself, there is very little diversion. When you start to  
25 look at the much larger area that we use as the sales



1 district, you start to get into Central Jersey and through  
2 New Brunswick and Princeton, places like that, as well as  
3 down further towards Baltimore. Then there's a little bit  
4 more.

5           On the whole, Philadelphia balances out very  
6 well from what I remember. I would have to actually check  
7 that to make sure. But there was very little, especially  
8 when you looked at the city-type diversion.

9           REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: Yeah. But the city in  
10 the next census is going to be down at least one half  
11 congressman. So what's that, 8-, 900,000 people it's going  
12 to be down? So that the city's population is dwindling.  
13 And I guess I pose the question to you as I have everyone  
14 else.

15           How do we make Philadelphia an airport with  
16 more competitive prices when, when moving the airport's  
17 absolutely out of the question? Fifty miles in any  
18 direction is either in Harrisburg, Lehigh Valley,  
19 Baltimore, Washington. So that moving is out of the  
20 question.

21           It's a landlocked airport, and you're the  
22 primary tenants there. So obviously, you know, you got to  
23 look at this thing and say, to expand this airport, we got  
24 to be crazy because we can't get the flights off the runway  
25 when we can get them in.

1           And it still is a, it still is a major city.  
2 But our statistics show that it's 17th or 18th on the list  
3 of busiest airports, maybe 19th, 20th. Whatever that  
4 number is it is. And it's the 4th, soon to be 5th largest  
5 city in the nation. So something is obviously wrong.

6           And I think that equates directly into the  
7 rates that the people in Philadelphia and the five  
8 surrounding counties pay for airfare simply because,  
9 because of that. So, you know, if you can help me --

10           MR. HARIG: Certainly. Well, you saw the  
11 comparison when you look at how we stack up versus Newark  
12 and Continental up there. I would think -- and Mr. Hazel  
13 can probably testify to this much better than I can. But  
14 that part of the biggest problem with Philadelphia is not  
15 necessarily the fares. It's the access.

16           And it's just getting in and out. It's a  
17 congested airport. I mean, we'd love to put more there.  
18 It's a great airport for us. There's no question. But  
19 we're just, just filled up. And getting in, out, road  
20 access, everything else I think is probably a bigger  
21 problem than the airfares.

22           REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: By in and out, do you  
23 mean in and out of the runway or in and out of the  
24 surrounding areas?

25           MR. HARIG: In and out of the surrounding

1 areas, the parking, parking situation, the access.

2 MR. HAZEL: Well, let's talk about  
3 Philadelphia. First of all, we have a number of issues  
4 there. But what's happening is we're adding terminal  
5 capacity. But now we want to have airflow capacity that  
6 matches that. So we have an unbalanced situation.

7 If you don't have enough runway capacity, you  
8 have a problem. We don't have enough airflow capacity. It  
9 doesn't matter whose fault it is. We just don't have it.  
10 In my view, the biggest problem with Philadelphia is  
11 nothing with the airlines.

12 It has to do with the airport and the  
13 infrastructure. And, you know, if I can do anything, I  
14 would. I would be devoted resources of fixing that  
15 problem. There are people who spend time studying ways to  
16 significantly increase airflow capacity.

17 To do that requires enormous political and  
18 other investments, but there are ways to do that. There  
19 really are ways to do that substantially. And it's, to me,  
20 it's hard to imagine a bigger economic payoff than  
21 dramatically increasing the efficiency, the attractiveness,  
22 and the capacity of Philadelphia Airport.

23 But it's not something an airline can do. A  
24 lot of the terminal growth in Philadelphia has come at the  
25 airlines' request. But we can't -- there's only so much we

1 can do. But my only answer is I wouldn't give up on  
2 Philadelphia.

3 Sure, as you go down the East Coast, many of  
4 the airports are very, very small. And some of them you  
5 can't do anything with. Philadelphia is not quite in that  
6 situation. There are some things you can do.

7 REPRESENTATIVE MCGILL: Well, I appreciate  
8 your comments. And I asked them for a specific reason. I  
9 mean, we need, I believe, a relatively large effort by both  
10 political side, the business side, City of Philadelphia,  
11 who owns that airport, to recognize what an asset that  
12 airport is and what needs to be done to make changes to it.

13 And I know we're here, you know, looking at  
14 pricing. But I can't, I can't come to a conclusion in my  
15 mind how you could possibly drive down prices when you  
16 can't get more aircraft in and out of that airport in its  
17 current condition.

18 And that simply comes down to the number of  
19 runways that are there, the direction that those runways  
20 are facing, and the problems that we consistently have with  
21 getting airplanes across the runway. So, you know, these  
22 kind of hearings are important because we need to hear from  
23 you that you're excited about a Philadelphia International  
24 Airport.

25 But there are some inherent problems that, you

1 know, if we can eventually all get around a table, we can  
2 address and hopefully, hopefully correct the situation.  
3 The length of time it seems for us to get anything done,  
4 there seems to be years and years and years and years. And  
5 by that time, we seem to miss the boat.

6           So I wanted to get your response. I  
7 appreciate that. And even if you change hats, we might  
8 lean on you to be a part of that effort to make some  
9 changes down there. So thank you very much.

10           MR. HARIG: Thank you.

11           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you, gentlemen.

12           MR. HARIG: Thank you.

13           MR. HAZEL: Thank you.

14           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: The next testifier is  
15 David McIntosh. We're going to, we're going to try to get  
16 back on schedule a little bit if we can.

17           MR. McINTOSH: Mr. Chairman, I thank you for  
18 inviting the Susquehanna Area Regional Airport Authority to  
19 testify. This authority is your creation that occurred  
20 three years ago. If you'll bear with me, I would like to  
21 set the stage for our current situation.

22           First of all, I'd like to point out that  
23 listening to all this discussion, number one, we do not  
24 have a shortage of gates. Number one, we do not have  
25 exclusive gates rights; and we do not have a majority in

1 interest clause in our contract. We are free to service  
2 airlines, and we welcome all with open arms.

3 HIA is fortunate to be served by the majority  
4 of the major airlines: American, United, Delta, US  
5 Airways, Continental, and Northwest. It is our misfortune  
6 that we are not served by what is commonly called a low  
7 cost airline. US Airways, as you might expect, dominates  
8 the market with a 44 percent share; and United is second  
9 with a 13 percent share.

10 What we haven't been, really been discussing  
11 today is a second situation which enters into the equation  
12 SARAA must solve in order to bring good reliable  
13 competitive air service to South Central Pennsylvania. By  
14 referring to the chart that you will note, you will note  
15 that 1.2 million people live within a 45-minute drive time  
16 of HIA.

17 And I'd like to point that out very strongly  
18 because our, the gentlemen from US Air said that the  
19 population served here was less than 500,000. You have to  
20 look at it from the standpoint of the drive time, which 45  
21 minutes, due to our excellent interstate network, is a real  
22 advantage.

23 When you compare this 45-minute drive time,  
24 1.2 million people, when you compare this to similarly  
25 situated airports like Madison, Wisconsin, you'll find that

1 1.8 enplanements, people getting on planes, occur for every  
2 person residing within that area. HIA has .6 enplanements,  
3 one third.

4           The reason is obviously BWI and, to a lesser  
5 extent, Philadelphia International. We estimate that over  
6 one half million people within South Central Pennsylvania  
7 fly out of BWI. The reason obvious, Southwest. This  
8 extreme leakage from Pennsylvania to Maryland seriously  
9 impacts a critical regional asset, which is HIA.

10           Obviously, we have a chicken and egg  
11 situation. To obtain lower fares and better service, we  
12 need more passengers. To gain more passengers, we need  
13 lower fares and better service. Let's take a close look at  
14 the fares of HIA versus BWI.

15           First let us define what we say is  
16 noncompetitive. Any fare is noncompetitive if the  
17 round-trip fare differential is greater than \$100. We  
18 compared the fares in our top 25 O and D cities with those  
19 offered at BWI and found that 20 of the 25 cities had  
20 noncompetitive fares, representing 85 percent of our total  
21 traffic. The average BWI price advantage is \$174.

22           Now let's look at closer what the airlines  
23 describe as yield. You've gone through that with Mr. Testa  
24 and the US Air people. Generally, Southwest is at 8 cents  
25 or less. US Air I just said was 12, but now I guess it's

1 14. And airlines consider a profitable trip at 21 cents or  
2 better.

3           From the US Department of Transportation data,  
4 we've come up with some interesting statistics. Out of HIA  
5 into Chicago O'Hara, yield, 34 cents; Orlando, 10 cents,  
6 which US Air was quick to point out. And I understand that  
7 particularly if you look at Boston, HIA to Boston, 57  
8 cents; Pittsburgh run, 91 cents.

9           As you are aware, in major airport hubs,  
10 airlines offer a series of advanced purchase fares  
11 generally broken down into 21-day, 14-day, 7-day, and  
12 walk-up. I guess the gentlemen from US Air are gone. But  
13 I would assume when they talk about a business fare, it's  
14 the walk-up fare.

15           When we analyzed the competitive fares, we  
16 found the following: 60 percent of HIA top 25 O and D  
17 markets have no restricted fare offerings within 14 days of  
18 a scheduled departure. Lack of a 7-day advanced purchase  
19 fare is a severe handicap to the business traveler since  
20 the fare differential between 7-day and walk-up can be in  
21 excess of \$400.

22           Conversely, only 5 of the top 25 cities have  
23 the most restricted 21-day advanced purchase round-trip  
24 promotional fares, which you gentlemen were talking about  
25 earlier. Seventeen of HIA's top 25 O and D markets -- and



1 you've got to appreciate they're all in the eastern half of  
2 the United States -- top 17 of the 25 charge in excess of  
3 \$1,000 for a business walk-up fare.

4           Keep in mind that not all fares at HIA are  
5 noncompetitive with BWI, just the majority. As we tell our  
6 potential passengers, always check HIA. What are we doing  
7 to make HIA truly a competitive center of air economic  
8 activity here in South Central Pennsylvania?

9           For the last 18 months, we have been  
10 attempting to lure a low cost carrier to provide service  
11 along the East Coast. And it goes far beyond Southwest.  
12 We haven't heard much mentioned. We've heard AirTran but  
13 haven't heard Midway mentioned and I think only once Delta  
14 Express. These are all candidates that we have been  
15 talking to.

16           For the last nine months, we've talked with  
17 the major carriers trying to open new service to another  
18 hub. For example, Northwest has five flights a day out of  
19 HIA; but they all go to Detroit. They run you through that  
20 hub. We see that there is loading, particularly with  
21 regional jets, where they could run to Minneapolis or  
22 Memphis, their southern hub.

23           For the last six months, we have been talking  
24 with the major carriers about their fare structures at HIA  
25 pointing out what has been mentioned earlier, what I had

1 mentioned earlier. We have undertaken extensive marketing  
2 studies which will support a developing intensive  
3 three-year marketing action plan.

4           What are the results? The first two efforts;  
5 namely, talking about new hubs and getting a low cost  
6 carrier, they're an ongoing process of selling the  
7 potential profitability of opening a new service from HIA.  
8 About the last effort for fare adjustments, we have had no  
9 reaction from those airlines we have contacted who are not  
10 involved currently in a proposed merger.

11           We have been promised some action by an  
12 airline currently involved in a potential merger. Whether  
13 this cooperation will continue if the merger is completed  
14 is certainly subject to conjecture.

15           Sixty-seven percent of HIA's travel is  
16 business, and this has been true for the last seven years.  
17 During this period, HIA's departing passenger yearly count  
18 has decreased by over 1,000 -- excuse me -- 100,000 or 13  
19 percent. It is obvious that the fares are forcing business  
20 as well as the leisure traveler to move to, to use BWI.

21           Considering the time and cost spent in travel  
22 as well as the airport costs at BWI, the competitiveness of  
23 our industry in South Central Pennsylvania has been and is  
24 negatively affected. Will mergers help our constituency?  
25 It's hard to answer yes to the United/US Air merger since

1 the result will be one airline with 67 percent of the  
2 traffic out of HIA. Will it hurt? It will depend on fare  
3 and service cooperation. And your guess is as good as  
4 mine.

5 I'd like to add a couple of comments. I was  
6 listening to the testimony here today. One is regional  
7 jets. Regional jets are coming on board. We're pretty low  
8 down in the pecking order to get them coming in here.  
9 Although, we do now. COMAIR flies them in on the runs into  
10 Cincinnati.

11 Regional jets can be a big boost for us. And  
12 we are working with the airlines so that as they have  
13 equipment come on line, hopefully they will allocate some  
14 of it to HIA. The other thing that I think you have to  
15 understand about an airport of HIA's size is the fact that  
16 we're competing with other airports for assets.

17 What I mean by that is, for instance, Delta  
18 Express, who are locked in a heavy competitive situation  
19 coming out of the greater New York market -- La Guardia  
20 primarily but also Newark on the southern routes where they  
21 get locked in and fighting their competitors -- what  
22 happens is that they may have an 8 o'clock flight; and the  
23 competitor will come in and put a 7 o'clock flight plus a 9  
24 o'clock flight in.

25 All of a sudden, they have to react to this.

1 And therefore, the assets, the equipment comes committed to  
2 those major markets. So all I'm trying to do is summarize  
3 here some of the things that we're doing. And the  
4 situation as far as we're concerned, to say that BWI is the  
5 biggest problem is an understatement. Thank you, Mr.  
6 Chairman.

7 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you for your  
8 excellent testimony. Just a couple quick questions. On  
9 the -- you say in your testimony, "Any fare is  
10 noncompetitive if the round-trip fare differential is  
11 greater than \$100." Is that an industry standard that they  
12 use, or is it that your --

13 MR. McINTOSH: No. What we've done, we say  
14 that's a reasonable thing because if you, if you take  
15 somebody that's going to drive from Harrisburg down to  
16 Baltimore, you consider the drive time, considering the  
17 traffic, and then consider the parking fees. That is  
18 definitely about a \$100 bracket in there.

19 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Also, you said,  
20 "Conversely, only 5 of the top 25 cities have the most  
21 restricted 21-day advanced purchase round-trip promotional  
22 fares."

23 MR. McINTOSH: Yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: I kind of thought that  
25 when I was asking some questions to the prior two

1 gentlemen, they were not ignoring the questions but kind of  
2 giving me a little runaround. What you're saying is that  
3 those fares are not available obviously?

4 MR. McINTOSH: They're not available at all.  
5 What the prior gentlemen should have laid out to you is  
6 that the famous computer program that was generated  
7 originally by American Airlines, all they do is they see  
8 the demand as the load starts to come up.

9 If they're seeing that the full fare load is  
10 coming on more rapidly than they anticipated, then they cut  
11 back on the number of seats that are on the low fare. It's  
12 an intelligent way to run it. There's no question about  
13 that. But boy, it sure does give problems.

14 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Well, I would think  
15 so. In fact, I would think that it's -- and that was part  
16 of my questioning to them. It almost becomes a little bit  
17 deceptive when you're putting the advertising out there  
18 that the low fare is available; but as those seats fill up,  
19 then you get down to a very narrow number.

20 MR. McINTOSH: As they fill up and also as  
21 they reduce them, the total. They may start out with, say,  
22 in a 100-seat plane, with 20 low cost fares. But -- and  
23 they may only sell about 5 of them to start within the  
24 first few days. But for some reason, all of a sudden, the  
25 other fares start to load up. Then that 20 may be cut back

1 to 15. That's just the way the program works.

2 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: No wonder people are  
3 confused. Thank you. Representative -- excuse me, Mr.  
4 McIntosh. Representative Marsico.

5 MR. McINTOSH: Oh, I'm sorry.

6 REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: One quick question,  
7 Mr. Chairman. Since the authority took over the airport  
8 from the state a few years ago, are the enplanements, are  
9 they higher or lower?

10 MR. McINTOSH: Well, as I've said, they've  
11 dropped. We've had it three years. And when we took over,  
12 it was about 740,000. Now it's about 650,000 we're  
13 projecting for this year.

14 REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: Okay. I'm sorry. I  
15 missed that. You say they're lower then?

16 MR. McINTOSH: Yes, sir. And you can, you can  
17 lay it right out. It's the Baltimore effect.

18 REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: What are the --

19 MR. McINTOSH: And this is what we have to  
20 deal with, and we will.

21 REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: Well, the Baltimore  
22 effect was there three years ago, four years ago, five  
23 years ago. I mean, it's nothing new.

24 MR. McINTOSH: No. I beg to differ. It  
25 was not there to the degree that it is now. We had a

1 meeting -- I'll tell you this: We had a meeting with  
2 United Airlines and talking to them. And by the time the  
3 meeting came to a close, the most senior person in there  
4 said, you know, we're losing so much money out of  
5 Baltimore, we're considering we might pull out after the  
6 merger's done.

7           Interesting comment. But that has grown over  
8 the years, you know. Southwest now is planning to add 200  
9 more flights.

10           MR. TESTA: Thirty-one new gates. They're  
11 going to build a whole brand new complex, 10 flights a day,  
12 310 flights.

13           MR. McINTOSH: So you say Baltimore was there  
14 before. Yes, but a far lesser degree. And it's just grown  
15 tremendously.

16           MR. TESTA: They started with 17 flights.

17           MR. McINTOSH: The other aspect of the thing  
18 is, too, is that -- and it's something that we have to  
19 fight and something that we've got to overcome. And that  
20 is the mentality of the average passenger in this area and  
21 the mentality of the travel agent who, when you call, will  
22 say, Well, you can fly out of Baltimore for \$100.

23           Well, what is it out of Harrisburg? Well,  
24 it's always more expensive. You can go out of Baltimore  
25 for \$100. But that's part of our selling and marketing

1 problem.

2 REPRESENTATIVE MARSICO: Okay. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: One -- well, I  
4 assume -- well, I guess you shouldn't assume anything. But  
5 it was brought up as one of the recommendations that  
6 perhaps we look at some enhancements in funding somehow for  
7 promotion which would -- it was meant to be that these  
8 types of issues should be looked at or can be looked at by  
9 smaller size airports; but oftentimes they lack the funds  
10 to do it. Does that make sense to you?

11 MR. McINTOSH: It may be smaller. But  
12 frankly, with Harrisburg, the answer is no. This year, our  
13 marketing budget is \$630,000. And beyond that, we reserved  
14 another \$500,000 for incentives if we get new service in.  
15 In other words, this would be advertising support for  
16 getting, say, a low cost and/or getting new service that  
17 appreciably would affect us.

18 So that aspect of the thing for Harrisburg,  
19 the answer is no. We are undertaking right now -- and  
20 we'll see it probably go out in September for bid -- we're  
21 putting about 30 million into the terminal parking and et  
22 cetera area to materially improve the ambiance and the ease  
23 of using the airport.

24 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you.

25 MR. McINTOSH: Yes, sir.



1                   CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: The next testifiers  
2 are Kelly Fredericks, Professional Engineer, Executive  
3 Director of the Erie Municipal Airport Authority. And he  
4 will be joined by Gregory Orlando, Senior Vice President of  
5 Investments and Branch Manager, First Union Securities in  
6 Erie and President of the Erie Municipal Airport  
7 Authority. Gentlemen, when you're ready.

8                   MR. ORLANDO: Thank you very much, Mr.  
9 Chairman. And I know we're testifying at the end of a very  
10 long day. But on behalf of the Erie Municipal Airport  
11 Authority, I'd like to thank the House of Representatives  
12 and in particular this Subcommittee for allowing us the  
13 opportunity to testify before you regarding commercial air  
14 service to Erie, Pennsylvania.

15                   Today, our Executive Director and I will  
16 attempt to provide some insight from our experiences as it  
17 relates to the cost of flying from Erie as opposed to our  
18 competitor airports. We've heard about a few of them in  
19 the prior testimony: Cleveland, Buffalo, and Pittsburgh.

20                   We will also speak to the issue of passenger  
21 leakage and how it affects the local economy. My comments  
22 will address a broader, more background  
23 information-related, community-based perspective. And Mr.  
24 Fredericks will follow with his testimony, and he will  
25 provide more specific airport perspective detail. Much of

1 my discussion will be based on information derived from the  
2 airport's ongoing master plan update.

3           A little bit of background: Erie  
4 International Airport, Tom Ridge Field is a publicly owned,  
5 public use primary commercial service facility that serves  
6 the needs of Erie County, the western region of  
7 Pennsylvania, Western New York State, and Northeast Ohio as  
8 well.

9           Erie, Pennsylvania, with a population of over  
10 110,000, ranks as the Commonwealth's third largest city.  
11 Erie County has a population of nearly 285,000 people.  
12 Erie International Airport, Tom Ridge Field is located in  
13 Erie County in Northwestern Pennsylvania near two major  
14 interstate routes, East/West I-90 and North/South I-79.

15           Cleveland Hopkins International Airport is  
16 approximately 110 miles to the west. Buffalo International  
17 Airport is approximately 105 miles to the northeast. And  
18 Pittsburgh International Airport is approximately 125 miles  
19 to the south. These airports are well within two hours  
20 driving distance from our market.

21           The airport service region was selected based  
22 upon a 30-mile drive from Erie International Airport. Its  
23 limits are defined by the range and character of airline  
24 service provided by other air carrier airports outside the  
25 airport service region.

1           The service area includes Crawford, Erie,  
2 Forest, Mercer, Venango, and Warren Counties in  
3 Pennsylvania; Ashtabula and Trumbull Counties in Ohio; and  
4 Chautauqua County in New York. The primary airport service  
5 region encompasses most of Erie County, which has almost 30  
6 percent of the population in that region.

7           The airport service region has experienced a  
8 total population growth of about 1 1/2 tenths percent per  
9 year or about 1.5 percent over the last 10 years. Between  
10 1990 and 2000, the national average was about 1 percent per  
11 year or about 10 percent over that same period.

12           Regarding industry and employment, the region  
13 has experienced significant growth in nonagricultural  
14 employment during the last 10 years, including managerial,  
15 sales and service sector jobs that have more than offset  
16 the employment decrease trend in labor, the second ranked  
17 industry in 1980.

18           Today, the airport is served by US Airways, US  
19 Airways Express, Continental Express, and by Northwest  
20 Airlink. Erie presently has 28 flights a day, 14 arrivals  
21 and 14 departures. Of these, 10 flights are mainline jets  
22 and 18 are with turbo props.

23           It should be noted that beginning March 13th  
24 of this year, US Airways Express will introduce regional  
25 jets into the Erie market and discontinue the use of turbo

1 props. Additionally, in April, US Airways Express will add  
2 another regional jet flight.

3           Unfortunately, along with this good news came  
4 last week's announcement by Continental that effective June  
5 13th of this year, it will discontinue service in the Erie  
6 market. Currently, Continental provides direct service to  
7 Cleveland. US Airways and US Airways Express provide  
8 direct service to Pittsburgh, and Northwest Airlinck  
9 provides direct service to Detroit.

10           Over the past decade, passenger enplanements  
11 have remained relatively flat with the peak being in 1991  
12 with 188,396 enplanements and the low point in 1994 with  
13 132,651 enplanements. Enplanements for 1999 were  
14 approximately 167,000, and preliminary numbers for 2000  
15 indicate about 156,000 enplaned passengers. US Airways  
16 presently enplanes approximately 65 percent of the  
17 passengers, Northwest approximately 21 percent, and  
18 Continental approximately 14 percent.

19           From an economic impact standpoint, the  
20 Commonwealth's Bureau of Aviation, through their  
21 consultants, has undertaken a study that has preliminarily  
22 indicated that the Erie International Airport, Tom Ridge  
23 Field generates nearly \$104 million to the local economy on  
24 an annual basis.

25           Of this amount, over 88 million is directly

1 related to commercial air service activity. While this is  
2 a very substantial amount, the Erie community and  
3 surrounding region feel strongly that this number can be  
4 increased dramatically through increased commercial service  
5 activity at the airport.

6           The airport remains the vital link to  
7 retaining existing business and also attracting new  
8 business activity. With that in mind, in 1998, the Erie  
9 Conference on Community Development and the Economic  
10 Development Corporation of Erie County commissioned  
11 Business Retention Technologies, Incorporated to address  
12 the key component of Team Pennsylvania, its business  
13 calling program.

14           Through CEO interviews conducted by outreach  
15 specialists, the business calling program identified  
16 business needs, created a system for quickly responding to  
17 those needs, and strengthened the partnership among job  
18 creators, the Commonwealth, and economic and community  
19 development professionals.

20           The extensive study concluded that business  
21 owners/manufacturers in Erie County identified inadequacies  
22 of air service provided by Erie International Airport,  
23 specifically limited choices in scheduling/destinations  
24 time consuming and -- limited choices in scheduling  
25 destinations, time consuming and rigid -- limited choices

1 in scheduling; destinations time consuming and rigid;  
2 inordinately high fares. Got it right that time.

3           Those interviewed expressed a recurring theme  
4 of lost business opportunities, competitor's location was  
5 more accessible by air, and hinders overall economic growth  
6 in Erie County and the region. Based on the interviews  
7 with over 600 business owners and manufacturers in Erie  
8 County, it was determined improvement in air service was  
9 critically needed in the following areas:

10           More scheduling time of day options; more  
11 gateway and hub destinations; and more competitive fares.  
12 Finally, the report concluded that lack of adequate air  
13 service is the number one long-term issue facing Erie  
14 County businesses.

15           As I indicated earlier, Mr. Fredericks will  
16 discuss in more specific detail issues regarding airfares,  
17 available service, new markets, and how successful the  
18 airport is actually doing when it comes to providing  
19 optimum air service options for this region.

20           Again, we thank you very much for the  
21 opportunity to testify before you. And Mr. Fredericks has  
22 a prepared text at this time.

23           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you. Mr.  
24 Fredericks, you may want to -- and I'll leave the option up  
25 to you. But if you'd like, we can make sure that this is

1 entered into the record verbatim off of the written  
2 testimony if you would like to summarize it.

3 MR. FREDERICKS: In the spirit of time, Mr.  
4 Chairman, I will certainly do what you prefer. I think I  
5 can get through this relatively quickly. It does hit  
6 specific fare details and points out -- I hate to say dire  
7 straights -- but the conditions.

8 We think we're almost a poster child in Erie  
9 for some of the effects of various airfares. If that's  
10 acceptable, I will go through this very quickly. Good  
11 afternoon. And thank you for allowing me to testify before  
12 you regarding commercial air service as it pertains to Erie  
13 International Airport, Tom Ridge Field.

14 As Mr. Orlando previously stated to you, Erie  
15 International Airport, Tom Ridge Field is uniquely and  
16 perhaps unfortunately located within two hours driving time  
17 of three much larger airports that collectively enplane  
18 over 19 million passengers on an annual basis.

19 Additionally, it should be noted that the  
20 Detroit International Airport is 260 miles from Erie and  
21 does have some impact on Erie's service region.  
22 Furthermore, there are three smaller commercial service  
23 reliever airports, Franklin, Pennsylvania; Jamestown, New  
24 York; and Youngstown, Ohio located within approximately one  
25 hour's drive that compete for some of Erie's market.

1                   Recently, professional air service consultants  
2 indicated that Erie International Airport, Tom Ridge Field  
3 is literally located at ground zero when it comes to  
4 competing for commercial air service customers within this  
5 tri-state area.

6                   Furthermore, it was indicated that in many  
7 aspects, Erie is between a rock and a hard place when it  
8 comes to enticing commercial service carriers to enhance or  
9 start up new services to this market. Previous studies  
10 validate that Erie's service market has an extremely high  
11 rate of passenger leakage to Cleveland, Buffalo, and  
12 Pittsburgh markets.

13                   These studies also determined, interestingly  
14 enough, that the residents of the service area travel  
15 approximately 22.5 percent more than the national average.  
16 In fact, it was determined that 271,000-plus Erie region  
17 people traveled by air from the region in 1996.

18                   The collective price of airfares for this was  
19 in excess of \$76 million. Of these amounts, 131,000,  
20 nearly 132,000 passengers, representing nearly \$37 million  
21 in airfares, departed from Erie. Nearly 77,000 passengers,  
22 representing approximately \$21.5 million in airfares,  
23 departed from Cleveland.

24                   57,500 passengers departed from Pittsburgh,  
25 and those airfares represented in excess of \$16 million.



1 And 5,326 passengers, representing about \$1.5 million in  
2 airfares, departed from Buffalo. What I really want to  
3 underscore in this particular fact is these figures  
4 indicate that for 1996 -- and they have subsequent years as  
5 well -- that over half or approximately 51 percent of  
6 Erie's passengers depart from other airports.

7 Air carrier operations are those used in  
8 revenue service by the major scheduled airlines operating  
9 aircraft with more than 60 passenger seats. Included are  
10 scheduled flights, charter flights, diverted flights, and  
11 ferry operations.

12 In 1998, nearly 3,000 air carrier operations  
13 were performed at Erie International Airport, Tom Ridge  
14 Field. The number of air carrier aircraft operations at  
15 the airport has generally decreased over the years but at  
16 varying rates since 1976 due to a combination of factors,  
17 including changes in levels of airline service, aircraft  
18 seating capacity, airline fares, aviation fuel costs,  
19 economic trends, airline strikes, and airline mergers.

20 It should be noted, as Mr. Orlando had  
21 indicated, that recently Connecticut Express announced last  
22 week that it will be discontinuing service to Erie  
23 International Airport, Tom Ridge Field on June 13th of this  
24 year. Continental previously departed the Erie market in  
25 the early 1990s, only to return a few years later.

1           This recent announcement comes after  
2 Continental had announced last fall that it would be  
3 introducing all regional jet service to Erie sometime in  
4 early 2001. While Continental continues to turn a profit  
5 in Erie with a 5.3 percent increase in its boarded  
6 passengers for 2000, it cited congestion problems due to  
7 runway construction at its Cleveland hub as the reason for  
8 stopping service.

9           However, after announcing plans to discontinue  
10 service from Erie for congestion reasons, Continental  
11 immediately announced that it would introduce two new  
12 markets into Cleveland. It is clear that in these days of  
13 competition, even successful growing markets such as Erie  
14 to Cleveland can be terminated when another market adds  
15 more to the airline's bottom line.

16           And attached as part of my testimony, Mr.  
17 Chairman, is a newspaper article from yesterday's business  
18 section of the Erie Times that goes into greater detail of  
19 some of the great concerns we have regarding customer  
20 leakage in the Erie market.

21           The most frequently operated aircraft has been  
22 the DC-9-30 utilized by US Airways. There was an average  
23 of 275 daily air carrier enplanements in 1998, representing  
24 an average load factor of approximately 64 percent. The  
25 volume of enplaned passengers at Erie International

1 Airport, Tom Ridge Field is forecast to increase to  
2 approximately 194,000 in 2005, then approximately 219,000  
3 in the year 2010, and then hopefully to around 265,000 in  
4 the year 2020.

5           And just as a point of fact, the master plan  
6 consultants have developed these forecasts based on many  
7 factors. And most notably of those factors is the annual  
8 growth rate of 2.4 percent which was based on an  
9 examination of predicted population growth in the region as  
10 well as predicted employment growth.

11           Whether by perception or fact, Erie  
12 International Airport, Tom Ridge Field has been adversely  
13 affected by airfares that are higher than those achieved at  
14 Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Buffalo. While the overall  
15 percentage of Erie service region passengers who fly out of  
16 other airports has remained relatively constant at about 51  
17 percent, the introduction of low cost carriers at  
18 surrounding airports has shifted more leakage to Buffalo  
19 and decreased the amount of leakage to Pittsburgh.

20           Cleveland continues to be the largest  
21 recipient of Erie's leakage, due primarily to the presence  
22 of Southwest Airlines. Buffalo continues to grow its  
23 captured amount of Erie's passengers by recently  
24 introducing Southwest Airlines at its airport.

25           Another new addition to Buffalo's stable of

1 low cost carriers is JetBlue. Additionally, they are  
2 served by AirTran and Vanguard Airlines. Pittsburgh is  
3 served by Vanguard and AirTran. It should be noted that  
4 only a few years back, Buffalo International Airport saw  
5 its passenger totals drop below 3 million.

6 Of even more significance was the recent  
7 announcement that for the year 2000, Buffalo International  
8 Airport exceeded 4.5 million passengers and saw an increase  
9 of nearly 700,000 passengers for the year. This has been  
10 clearly linked to the introduction of low cost carriers  
11 into the market.

12 Regarding Erie's top 25 markets and their  
13 associated fares, please refer to the table attached. And  
14 it's part of the testimony, Mr. Chairman. As you can see  
15 from the table, there are dramatic differences in the  
16 lowest airfares available in Erie's top 25 domestic markets  
17 compared to fares, using Erie as a benchmark, at Buffalo,  
18 Cleveland and Pittsburgh.

19 Of important note, of those 25 domestic  
20 markets, Erie has the highest fares in 21 of the 25  
21 markets. So to boil it down for the Erie passenger, the 25  
22 top destinations, we got the highest fares in 21 of them.  
23 And I want to also indicate that on average, our fares are  
24 approximately 34 percent higher.

25 The Airline Deregulation Act of 1978 was a

1 major step toward the deregulation of highly regulated  
2 industry. The act liberalized the rules that governed  
3 airline operators. For some, deregulation has been viewed  
4 as a success because it brought consumers a greater  
5 selection of flights at more affordable prices.

6           For others -- perhaps Erie -- who continue to  
7 struggle with higher airfares and limited service options,  
8 the act has not been deemed so favorable. In a deregulated  
9 airline operating environment, it is a reality that  
10 airports both within the Commonwealth and beyond will  
11 continue to compete with each other often for the same  
12 passengers.

13           Each airport in the Commonwealth cannot expect  
14 to have major jet service from a national carrier. For  
15 some airports, supporting one regional commuter and doing  
16 it well represents a realistic air service plan. It is  
17 important that when evaluating its own service, each  
18 airport must recognize its assets and its limitations from  
19 a realistic point of view.

20           The ability of each Pennsylvania commercial  
21 service airport to improve its existing level of commercial  
22 air service varies dramatically among individual markets.  
23 And I think you certainly heard that today. While some  
24 airports appear to have the ability to attract and support  
25 service to new markets, others will need to focus their

1 attention and efforts on sustaining their existing levels  
2 of commercial air service.

3           It is no secret that undoubtedly the future  
4 will bring air carrier mergers, creation of new start-up  
5 carriers, and technological improvements to the industry  
6 that will have dramatic impact on how the citizens of the  
7 Commonwealth are served.

8           Opinions vary as to this impact; however, it  
9 is clear that the value of aviation to the Commonwealth  
10 will continue to increase. Pennsylvania's ability to move  
11 people and goods by air will continue to serve as a vital  
12 link to our ability to compete in the global marketplace.

13           Deputy Secretary Voras and PennDOT's Bureau of  
14 Aviation are to be commended for their initiative of  
15 championing several studies, including a statewide systems  
16 plan, an economic impact study, and an assessment of  
17 Pennsylvania air services, that will afford airports and  
18 their communities with information and tools that can  
19 assist them in taking steps to sustain and improve  
20 scheduled commercial air service.

21           The Erie Municipal Airport Authority strongly  
22 believes that the only way to improving Pennsylvania's air  
23 service is through partnerships, partnerships between the  
24 airport and its business community; partnerships between  
25 the airport and its current carriers, our airlines;

1 partnerships between the airport and prospective carriers;  
2 and partnerships with our state-elected officials.

3           In no way, shape, or form are we at the Erie  
4 Municipal Airport Authority indicating that we should  
5 return to a regulated environment. But the Erie Municipal  
6 Airport Authority is here today to strongly and  
7 respectfully urge the Commonwealth's House and Senate to  
8 greatly elevate the importance of aviation as it relates to  
9 Pennsylvania's future transportation and economic  
10 development initiatives.

11           And as Mr. Orlando had indicated, I too am  
12 very appreciative of the opportunity to present some of  
13 this information before you. And I want to just emphasize  
14 that Erie Municipal Airport Authority sits before you  
15 today. We want to be a strong partner as we move forward  
16 in trying to do something to enhance, if you will, and  
17 preserve air service within the Commonwealth of  
18 Pennsylvania.

19           I'm available for any questions. And thank  
20 you.

21           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you, both of  
22 you. Mr. Fredericks, since you were last, 51 percent of  
23 leakage, that's an impressive figure. I expect that -- and  
24 perhaps I should have asked that of the last testifier.  
25 But where did you get that figure from?

1 MR. FREDERICKS: Well, actually, we did  
2 previous air service studies, elaborate studies --

3 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: A consultant?

4 MR. FREDERICKS: Yes, that is correct. And I  
5 will say, Mr. Chairman, that unfortunately -- and yes,  
6 that's an impressive figure. Probably I'm not impressing  
7 my boss when I say, Hey, look what we're losing. But  
8 frankly, at this point in time, that figure we don't feel  
9 takes into account the -- we haven't realized the negative  
10 impact that Southwest and JetBlue will truly have in our  
11 market as it relates to Buffalo. So that number  
12 potentially could climb in the months to come.

13 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Absolutely. It puts  
14 you in a very interesting situation, to say the least. Mr.  
15 McIntosh made some interesting points. And we're having a  
16 travel, representative of the travel industry testify  
17 tomorrow. But do you feel the same, the same problem with  
18 your travel agents, that they might answer the phone and  
19 say, Oh, yeah. But go to Buffalo. It's cheaper?

20 MR. FREDERICKS: You're absolutely correct.  
21 And it's funny. I leaned over and said to Mr. Orlando when  
22 Mr. McIntosh was making his testimony that that is Erie  
23 exactly. But I'm also saying -- I'm not trying to -- I  
24 mentioned partnerships. I'm not trying to pick on the  
25 travel agents. I'm not trying to pick on the airlines.



1           It's incumbent upon us as we've, you know, put  
2 out the olive branch. We've got to do a better job of  
3 partnering with our travel agents to educate them on the  
4 benefits of flying out of Erie just as Mr. McIntosh is to  
5 the benefits of flying out of HIA. But yes, absolutely  
6 identical situation.

7           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: And again, it also  
8 seems to compound itself greatly because as I understand  
9 it, some of the programs that we talk about on the  
10 discounted airfares are just not offered at the smaller  
11 airports, which makes it worse. Travel agents, they're  
12 going to go where the, where those deals are.

13           MR. FREDERICKS: Yes.

14           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Why don't they -- I'm  
15 just curious. I guess they would say, the airlines would  
16 probably say that the reason we're not offering these is  
17 because we don't have to fill seats. But I'm not hearing  
18 that, that you're flying out full enplanement, your  
19 enplanements are full.

20           MR. FREDERICKS: As I indicated in my  
21 testimony, our, roughly our load factor is about 65  
22 percent. And arguably, I suppose that could be deemed on  
23 the bubble by some people. In all due respect, Mr.  
24 Chairman, I'm probably not intelligent enough. I don't  
25 understand it.

1 I mean, for Mr. Orlando and I, I don't  
2 understand why we had to pay \$863 a piece to go from Erie  
3 to, or to Pittsburgh and then on to Harrisburg today. But  
4 it's the law of supply and demand. Both planes were  
5 packed. But I just, I feel that on some of our other  
6 flights, you know, I just feel that, you know, every empty  
7 seat is lost revenue.

8 So it's a very complex issue. And it's  
9 certainly, I think it's something that perhaps if you asked  
10 the question to ten different people, a mix of travel  
11 agents, airline representatives, and perhaps airport  
12 executives, you may get seven or eight different answers  
13 because I don't think everybody completely reads off the  
14 same sheet of music.

15 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: That's becoming quite  
16 evident.

17 MR. FREDERICKS: It beats the heck out of me.

18 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: And perhaps one of the  
19 problems that we can look into to try to decipher this -- I  
20 can understand -- I think we're beginning to get a grasp of  
21 how the consumer is so confused out there. And then  
22 compounded with what he or she is reading in the newspaper,  
23 that you're frustrated because they can't find the deals  
24 and they can't find the deals on the network.

25 They call the travel agent. The travel agent

1 says, Well, I don't know about that deal or the seats are  
2 all taken. But go here, and you can find that. And the  
3 consumer doesn't realize probably the deal was never  
4 offered back home in the first place.

5 MR. FREDERICKS: Uh-huh. That's correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Okay. We will look  
7 into that. Your recommendation -- and by the way, I, I do  
8 not -- well, I better ask you the question first before I  
9 say I agree with you. "Respectfully urges the  
10 Commonwealth's House and Senate to greatly elevate the  
11 importance of aviation as it relates to Pennsylvania's  
12 future transportation and economic development initiative."

13 I would first like to say I agree with you in  
14 your commending the Bureau of Aviation and Deputy Secretary  
15 Voras. My experience has been that they've just done an  
16 excellent job. And they've probably done more over the,  
17 the past number of years than they've done in a long time.

18 And of course, I should be careful since Brad  
19 Mallory is --

20 MR. FREDERICKS: Right.

21 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: But anyway, to greatly  
22 elevate the importance of aviation, how would you suggest  
23 we do that?

24 MR. FREDERICKS: Well, it starts with a  
25 partnership. And certainly knowing your involvement with

1 the Governor's Aviation Advisory Committee and a  
2 partnership -- we've got to elevate -- we have Mr. Centini  
3 here today from the Pennsylvania Aviation Council serving  
4 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton.

5           But just getting the appropriate -- and I  
6 think there's a wonderful mix on the Governor's Aviation  
7 Advisory Committee. I think from our report's perspective,  
8 the amount of state dollars that are portioned to aviation  
9 via a transportation line item out of the state capital  
10 budget is \$5 million annually. That needs to be elevated.

11           I think we need to take a hard look at -- and  
12 I used this reference -- something similar to, from a  
13 capital standpoint -- I want to say it was around  
14 1990 -- but Act 117, somewhere in that vintage, which  
15 helped the noncommercial service airports make some  
16 dramatic improvements.

17           I think we need to invest in Pennsylvania's  
18 future by directing additional funds towards capital  
19 improvements. But also, it can't just stop with capital  
20 improvements. I really think that there has to be a strong  
21 initiative. And that's one of the nice things that  
22 the -- Bureau of Aviation is really handing us a dramatic,  
23 a significant amount of tools to use as we try to improve  
24 our air service.

25           But they're only as good as our ability to

1 implement them. And I think that there needs to be -- I  
2 mean, they allow us to benchmark where we're at in aviation  
3 today. I think there needs to be a strong initiative to  
4 keep the momentum going to ensure that the 16 commercial  
5 air service airports within the Commonwealth implement  
6 those or try to and try to come up -- and I don't have  
7 specifics -- but some innovative funding strategies to, to  
8 allow some of those airports that don't have the funds to  
9 do a marketing program to do that but perhaps to assist  
10 some airports in other aspects of their operating budget.

11           But I truly believe, I mean for -- again, I  
12 will simply state from Erie, every empty seat that departs  
13 Erie International Airport is losing money. And there's  
14 got to be a way for us to better partner with our existing  
15 carriers and try to, you know, for the benefit of our  
16 travelers, fill those seats.

17           And I think we could all win. And, you know,  
18 I'm just finding more and more -- and again, citing the  
19 Bureau of Aviation's preliminary reports as Mr. Orlando  
20 cited it, the economic impact, I mean, the new video that  
21 the Commonwealth has come up with.

22           I mean, everybody I talked to from one side of  
23 the state to the other, it's just, aviation is becoming  
24 more and more vital. Again, it's the critical link to  
25 our -- if we're going to compete in the global marketplace,

1 you know, we've got to invest more, I think, in the future.

2 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thanks for clarifying  
3 that for me. And I do agree with you. Finally, I would  
4 like to just address the comment of Mr. Orlando. I think  
5 he hit the nail on the head when your businesses back home  
6 said that aviation, lack of adequate air services is the  
7 number one long-term issue facing Erie County businesses.

8 And I think that says an awful lot. And  
9 probably it's going to affect just about every community in  
10 Pennsylvania. So it's just another reason why we need to  
11 do some enhancements to the system. And I think we need to  
12 really do some investigation on the consumers' end of it to  
13 try to get a handle on, on where rates are competitive and  
14 let's try to fill up the plane.

15 I mean, if we're, overall, if we're looking at  
16 a 50 percent leakage rate, it doesn't make any sense that  
17 these people are getting in their cars and driving  
18 someplace sometimes for a couple hours when perhaps given  
19 the right information, the right push and the right  
20 assistance, they can be flying from their home airport  
21 without using the roads, the roadways, which as we know are  
22 already congested. Thank you.

23 MR. PARSELLS: Real quick, Mr. Chairman. I  
24 should know this, but I don't. How big is the Buffalo  
25 market? We've heard testimony that the small, these low

1 fare air carriers won't go into these smaller markets.  
2 Obviously, they found some magic bullet to attract them.

3 MR. FREDERICKS: Well, Paul, I don't know  
4 exactly the size of the market for Buffalo. I do  
5 know -- and it was interesting that -- I should have  
6 provided as part of my testimony recent articles from the  
7 newspapers. But they went through a dramatic downturn not  
8 that many years ago and literally on a much larger scale, I  
9 feel, were in the same situation that we in Erie are in  
10 right now.

11 We've seen a -- that's been elevated in the  
12 last few years, again, just in year 2000 by 700,000 up to  
13 over 4.5 million. I don't know. And I hate to defer to  
14 Mr. Testa, if he knows the size of the Buffalo market. But  
15 it is, I think it's safe to say that it's certainly a  
16 market that's in that million-plus range.

17 MR. TESTA: You mean the actual number of  
18 passengers that travel out of Buffalo?

19 MR. PARSELLS: Well, I guess the market.

20 MR. TESTA: The number of passengers right now  
21 are about 5, 5 1/2 million. Five million I guess. It had  
22 gone all the way down to about 3 million, 3 1/2 million.  
23 But since Southwest went into Buffalo really as a stopgap,  
24 hurry up and go because JetBlue was starting to hit all the  
25 upstate marketers.

1 MR. PARSELLS: I guess that's what I was  
2 looking for. Is there a magic bullet out there? How do we  
3 get these low cost carriers into these airports and  
4 obviously HIA?

5 MR. TESTA: They are markets under 200,000. I  
6 don't want to -- but Manchester, there's 105,000 people in  
7 the City of Manchester. Jackson, Mississippi has almost  
8 nobody. You know, there are some small markets they have  
9 going on. But they stimulate it. So what happens is the  
10 small market is no longer a small market.

11 It becomes a very big market because people  
12 are traveling from all the way around, and they stimulate  
13 the numbers of trips per person because they're so  
14 affordable now. Instead of a once-in-three-year trip to  
15 Orlando, they can go every year.

16 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you very much.

17 MR. FREDERICKS: Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: And now last but not  
19 least, someone that I know personally, Mr. Barry Centini,  
20 who is the Airport Director of the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton  
21 International Airport. Barry, when you are ready, you may  
22 begin.

23 MR. CENTINI: Thank you very much. Thank you,  
24 Mr. Chairman. On behalf of my, my County Board of  
25 Commissioners, we really appreciate, I appreciate the



1 opportunity to be here before you today to talk about  
2 pricing. The Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport,  
3 along with other airports in the Commonwealth, has and  
4 continues to experience high airfares.

5           At the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International  
6 Airport, the 5th largest air carrier scheduled service  
7 airport in the Commonwealth, which is presently being  
8 served by US Airways, United Express, COMAIR, the Delta  
9 Connection, and US Airways Express, high airfares drive  
10 approximately 40 percent, 120,000 of our market air  
11 travelers to other airports; notably, Philadelphia, Newark,  
12 Allentown, JFK, and in some cases to Baltimore, a 3-hour  
13 drive.

14           Every airport reasons the high ticket prices  
15 drive their market passengers away. A recent proposal we  
16 received to develop an airport marketing program from SH&E,  
17 a national airport consulting firm located in  
18 Massachusetts, revealed that the average airfare at  
19 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton increased 8 percent in the last year,  
20 nearly three times greater than the US average fare  
21 increase.

22           A review of selected airport enplanements in  
23 the Commonwealth, 2000 versus 1999, reveals Harrisburg was  
24 down 10.8 percent and 75,000 passengers; Erie was down, as  
25 we heard, about 8.2 percent; Williamsport down 9.9; Reading

1 down 26 percent. Our enplanements at the  
2 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport fell  
3 approximately 7 percent. That equated to a little over  
4 16,500 passengers.

5 An area I want to talk about with this loss of  
6 enplanements is that it affects our federal entitlement  
7 dollars an airport receives for capital improvements. The  
8 loss of 16,500 passengers at the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton  
9 International Airport equates to a loss of a little over  
10 \$90,000 of federal dollars.

11 That's approximately 5 percent of our federal  
12 entitlement monies, monies that we can put forth to capital  
13 improvements at our facility. When you look at Pittsburgh  
14 International Airport's 1999 versus 1998 enplanements,  
15 you'll see a decrease of 881,000 passengers. And that  
16 equated to approximately \$500,000 of federal entitlement  
17 funds.

18 This is not a loss to Pittsburgh or  
19 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton or just to us or Erie. It's a loss  
20 of federal dollars to the Commonwealth. Many of our lost  
21 passengers go to Newark. A majority of Harrisburg's, as we  
22 have heard, lost passengers go to Baltimore. Pittsburgh's  
23 lost passengers are going to Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio.

24 Reading, Erie and Lehigh Valley, many airports  
25 throughout the Commonwealth all lose passengers to other

1 states' airports. This trend only strengthens the other  
2 airports with federal dollars that should be coming, if we  
3 had competitive airfares, to the Commonwealth's airports.

4 I'd like to read some of the quotes, a brief  
5 couple quotes from our local newspapers regarding airfares.  
6 We have a Talkback at our local newspaper, and anybody can  
7 call in. And Talkback says that the service is fine. It's  
8 just your prices that are outrageous. Let's be practical.  
9 The bottom line is money.

10 My wife and I just flew to San Francisco out  
11 of Allentown/Bethlehem/Easton for \$100 less than we would  
12 have paid out of Avoca. We're leaving to go to Florida,  
13 but we're not leaving from Wilkes-Barre/Scranton. We're  
14 saving \$180 on each ticket from Lehigh Valley.

15 The Great Valley Technology Alliance wants to  
16 persuade travelers to use the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Airport  
17 more often. Just what is it about the word money that the  
18 alliance doesn't understand? A travel agent with AAA  
19 Travel in Wilkes-Barre said a round-trip ticket from  
20 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton to Washington would cost \$1,080. The  
21 same ticket out of Lehigh Valley is \$708.

22 The only reason people don't use the  
23 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Airport is the high cost of the  
24 ticket. We flew out of Binghamton for \$100 cheaper to  
25 Denver. A lady that lives just 5 minutes from the airport

1 and 15 relatives recently attempted to book a flight from  
2 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton to Las Vegas for a wedding. They  
3 will leave from Philadelphia saving \$4,352 or \$272 a  
4 ticket.

5 Our own State Representative, Tom Tigue, said,  
6 "The biggest problem with the airport is the cost of  
7 flying out of there, not the condition of the facility.  
8 Cost is what determines where people fly, and I don't know  
9 the solution." It's a Catch-22.

10 We're told there are not enough passengers to  
11 warrant additional carriers, but passenger rates are down  
12 because there isn't airline competition to lower the rates.  
13 When we compare our ticket prices to other airports, as  
14 most airports do, we look very competitive.

15 But in all reality, those competitive priced  
16 seats are near impossible to get because there is a limited  
17 number, amount of those seats on each flight. Our market  
18 passengers complain because they cannot get the lower  
19 priced seats and usually are quoted a second, third, or  
20 fourth tiered price which is much higher, in some cases  
21 hundreds of dollars more.

22 A prime example of this was just this week,  
23 the chairman of our board wanted to fly to Tampa. I got  
24 him a price for a ticket leaving March 13th coming back on  
25 the 18th. I got him this price at 9:30 in the morning. It

1 was \$280.75. I met the chairman of our board because we  
2 were doing a commercial about the airport at 2 o'clock.

3 He asked me at that time, Do you think you  
4 could get another ticket? I have a friend that's going to  
5 accompany me. I said, I'll go right back to the airport,  
6 and I'll get a price for you and reserve another ticket. I  
7 got that price at 3:30.

8 Now, remember the first price was at 9:30 in  
9 the morning. I get a price at 3:30, \$434. In a 6-hour  
10 period, the price went up. Same flight, same stops. In  
11 fact, this was a two-stopper on the way back. Had to go to  
12 Charlotte, Philadelphia and then to Wilkes-Barre. That's  
13 all that was available.

14 So I mean, people can sit here from US Air and  
15 say they can't really tell us how it happens. I don't  
16 think they even know how it happens. But somebody in that  
17 organization does.

18 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Do you have knowledge  
19 or do you have access to data of how many flights were  
20 available at 6:30 or 9:30 in the morning?

21 MR. CENTINI: On that day?

22 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Yes.

23 MR. CENTINI: No. I mean, I don't know what  
24 was coming back out of Tampa. If ticket price is our  
25 problem, which it is, we must be able to understand how the

1 airline prices and how they allocate inventory/seats at  
2 airports. Another story: Just this morning, a travel  
3 agent called me, a well-respected travel agent.

4           And he said, I was waiting this morning at 8  
5 o'clock. That's when the inventory opens up on US Air.  
6 And I usually call about three minutes to 8:00 so I'm the  
7 first one on the list. I dial in. I hold the guy on the  
8 phone. And then when inventory comes available, I try and  
9 jump on the seats.

10           Well, I wanted seats January 12th, year 2002,  
11 leave Wilkes-Barre/Scranton to one of the Florida markets,  
12 come back on the 22nd. Now, this is almost a year away.  
13 All seats are gone. Not only at Wilkes-Barre/Scranton.  
14 All those cheap seats are gone out of Philadelphia.

15           What is US Air doing? This travel agent tells  
16 me that they allocate those seats to the cruise lines; they  
17 allocate those seats to certain parties or individuals or  
18 corporations. And our local passengers are left with zero.  
19 So even though they may publish a fare of \$198 to Orlando,  
20 you're not getting that fare.

21           You could call all day. Most of the time,  
22 it's rare that you get that fare. Airports the size of  
23 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton don't have the resources to learn  
24 about all the inventory and pricing. I believe it would be  
25 in the best interest of the Commonwealth to aid the primary

1 air service airports which, when all on-airport business  
2 and visitor impacts are combined with the multiplier  
3 impact, pump more than \$11.8 billion into Pennsylvania  
4 economy, by giving the Secretary of Transportation, the  
5 Bureau of Aviation the necessary resources to examine and  
6 investigate how the major airlines determine the price of  
7 tickets at Pennsylvania air carrier airports.

8           We must understand the problem before we can  
9 recommend or suggest improvements to it. If we don't, all  
10 we can do is individually request an audience with the  
11 airlines and beg for lower fares. And let me say that on  
12 February 1st of this year, my Board of Commissioners and I  
13 went down to US Airways' headquarters and begged for lower  
14 fares.

15           We were successful. On the 14th and 15th of  
16 the month, they lowered fares to seven, the leisure markets  
17 in Florida. Of course, it's very difficult to get those  
18 fares. And some of the fares in the long haul West Coast  
19 markets were lowered. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

20           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Thank you. Were you  
21 here during Mr. Hudson's testimony, the advocacy group,  
22 consumer advocacy?

23           MR. CENTINI: I think I was in right at the  
24 end of it.

25           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Let me ask you this

1 just for the record so when we put all this record  
2 together, we can figure, hopefully figure something out.  
3 Gate access, that's not an issue at your airport?

4 MR. CENTINI: No, it's not.

5 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: You don't have a  
6 problem with that. So sharing, there wouldn't necessarily  
7 be a problem sharing gates?

8 MR. CENTINI: We have no gate problems at  
9 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton.

10 CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Well, I think, I think  
11 you've summed it up extremely well. And I commend you for  
12 coming forward. And it appears that, at least to me,  
13 there's a very troubling scenario developing here. Perhaps  
14 it's consumer education.

15 But I think that you can only do so much for  
16 the consumer without -- it seems like we need to know the  
17 other side of the formula. And to my knowledge, the  
18 airport, the airlines are not really releasing that side of  
19 the formula.

20 In other words, I think it would be very  
21 interesting to know that if they are going to advertise a  
22 rate for a certain flight, that the consumer has every  
23 right to know how many seats are available for that given  
24 flight on a given day. Would you like to comment on that?

25 MR. CENTINI: I believe that they need enough



1 seats. I'll tell you what. I'm sitting here, and I'm  
2 deathly afraid right now of Wednesday. We promised US Air  
3 that we're going to advertise some of the cheap fares that  
4 we got. And we have pulled our advertising together, and  
5 we're starting Wednesday with TV and radio.

6           And when we put 174 up there to Tampa and 198  
7 to Orlando and our market people are going to call and they  
8 cannot get that fare, our phone's going to be ringing off  
9 the hook. Our commissioners, our board members are going  
10 to get bombarded by the constituency.

11           And we're going to be right back in the paper  
12 with the type of articles that you see before you.

13           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: When do those rates,  
14 when are they scheduled to start?

15           MR. CENTINI: They have already started last  
16 Friday.

17           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Good. I'll be giving  
18 you a call. Paul or Eric? (No response.)

19           MR. CENTINI: Thank you.

20           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: Barry, thank you very  
21 much.

22           MR. CENTINI: Thank you.

23           CHAIRPERSON FAIRCHILD: For those of you in  
24 attendance, by the way, the two people that make the, the  
25 Transportation Committee work, you got the two Executive

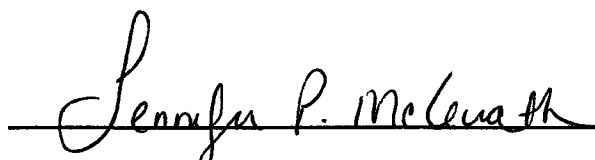
1 Directors here, Paul Parsells and Eric. I think you'll  
2 probably run into most of them in your career if you're  
3 interested in transportation issues.

4 But gentlemen, thank you for being here. And  
5 of course, Dana, our Chief Counsel on the Transportation  
6 Committee. Thank you. And please feel free to submit any  
7 additional comments if you would like. And we will  
8 reconvene the hearings tomorrow morning. Thank you.

9 (Whereupon, at 4:41 p.m., the hearing  
10 adjourned.)

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1 I hereby certify that the proceedings and  
2 evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes  
3 taken by me during the hearing of the within cause and that  
4 this is a true and correct transcript of the same.

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11 JENNIFER P. McGRATH

12 Registered Professional Reporter

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17 My Commission Expires:

18 April 30, 2001

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21  
22  
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24 P.O. Box 1383  
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Pottsville, Pennsylvania 17901

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