

## **AIRCRAFT MECHANICS FRATERNAL ASSOCIATION**

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July 22, 2008

Frederick L. Mohr, VP Maintenance & Engineering  
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Mr. Mohr:

I received a copy of your letter responding to the June 16, 2008, letter sent to you from AMFA Locals 14 and 32. After reading both letters it is obvious to me that both Alaska Airlines and AMFA have similar interests. You state, “We will not compromise our standards and culture in this arena at any time or any place of our operation.” We too support and encourage this mandate.

Unfortunately, the statement does not specifically state what *standards* and what *culture* we intend to protect from compromise. It can be assumed that you speak of the safety standards and corporate culture that Alaska Airlines has cultivated over the many years. What is less clear is Alaska Airline’s intentions when it comes to other equally important aspects of our standards and our culture.

There are four areas of concern that surface when contemplating moving aircraft maintenance to a foreign country: Aircraft Safety, Aircraft Security, the Environment, and the US Economy.

**Aircraft Safety** – It is an accepted fact that there is just one maintenance program – one standard. However, aircraft returning from vendor performed maintenance very often do not reflect maintenance practices performed per the maintenance program. The FAA has publicly admitted that they do not have the resources to provide proper oversight of the hundreds of foreign repair stations, and when they do manage to make an on site visit it is well announced and the repair station has ample advance notice negating any meaningful oversight. Poorly trained and unlicensed workers, many who do not speak English, are not capable of performing aircraft maintenance to the US standard.

**Aircraft Security** – In light of the fact that US aircraft have been used by terrorists to attack us and the persistent efforts since 9-11 to turn more of our aircraft against us mandates the need to create a higher level of vigilance. We must be certain, at all times, of who has access to our nation’s aircraft. In the US workers are fingerprinted, FBI background checked, drug and alcohol tested, and are surrounded by other US workers who place their own families on these aircraft insuring a level of security that cannot be matched. This same standard does not exist at foreign repair facilities.

**The Environment** – The United States has learned over many years of neglect what harm we can cause to our planet when we fail to properly process our maintenance waste streams. Aircraft maintenance produces many by-products that if not properly handled can contaminate our land, air, and water. A significant generator of hazardous waste is the airframe painting process that all require proper handling: strippers, wash water, sealants, tapes, paint etc. Additionally, the workers painting the aircraft must take measures to protect themselves and the air we breathe as they apply the primers and paint. In the US we have made great advances in cleaning up our processes and procedures. Developing countries are decades behind the US in these protective measures and are fouling our planet – acts that are illegal in the US are business as usual in other countries.

The Economy – Alaska Airlines has become a significant part of the aviation industry in the US. ASA the corporation has benefited from the privilege to operate in the US and everyone involved has also benefited. Passengers have been transported to their destinations; stockholders have had the opportunity to see a return on their investment; employees, both management and unionized have good jobs; suppliers of many goods and services have benefited economically; federal, state, and city governments receive tax revenues; and the economic cycle revolves. By sending good US jobs to foreign countries, ASA is breaking this economic cycle and is taking for granted the great privilege that has been given to them to operate in the most lucrative market on the planet. US consumers want to be loyal to US companies and it is easy when those companies exclusively do business in the US. When companies send jobs and the resultant economic benefit to foreign countries they are communicating the message that they no longer fully appreciate and support their country of origin.

The reason most often given for the need to look beyond our borders for aircraft maintenance services is to reduce costs, typically in the form of lower labor rates. But, as I have related above, reduced labor costs are only a fraction of what US corporations are seeking when they venture beyond our borders.

The real savings that are being obtained come from the ability of US corporations to circumvent federal and state law and regulations. Clearly, there is no Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to deal with in foreign countries. The ability to maneuver around United States law is where the significant savings are realized.

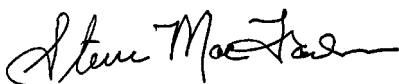
I am certain every United States citizen would agree that these four items are very important to a safe healthy airline industry and a stable growing US economy. The contradiction as I see it is that sending Alaska Airlines aircraft to a foreign country for maintenance does in fact significantly compromise ASA's standards and culture; both corporate and country.

I know that Alaska Airlines did not set out to find a way to compromise the safety standards and security of their passengers and employees or to further foul the environment. However, in an effort to maintain competitiveness with your peers, you are being lead down that very road.

I believe the American people would reward a US corporation who was honest about the risks and harm that aircraft maintenance outsourcing brings to the United States and would be willing to pay a premium for your services. At a time when our country is in serious economic distress and the public is looking to corporations to act environmentally responsible it seems that a prudent forward thinking US corporation would recognize the great privilege that they have been given and provide leadership in this area. I am certain that the American public would rally around an airline that acknowledged these risks and committed to maintain their aircraft in the US where we have the ability to protect our interests, our environment, and our economy.

AMFA representatives would welcome an opportunity to meet with you in person to further discuss this important matter.

Respectfully,



Steve MacFarlane  
National Director

CC: Bill Ayer  
AMFA Local 14  
AMFA Local 32