

August 7, 2003

The Honorable Norman Y. Mineta  
U.S. Department of Transportation 400 7th Street, S.W~ Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Mineta:

I wish to applaud the Bush Administration's decision to declare seafood inspection an inherently governmental function. The safety of our nation's seafood supply should be a national priority.

As you and your colleagues in the Administration consider issues of protecting public safety, I ask that you extend the same level of safety to our skies as you do to our seafood. If seafood inspectors are inherently governmental, shouldn't air traffic controllers (who are responsible for guiding more than one million passengers every day) receive the same designation?

I have some additional information on other inherently governmental employees that I wish to share with you. Federal employees in Hawaii are working to keep fire ants and the nettle caterpillar from attacking crops. Federal employees currently monitor the health of baby elephants at the Ringling Brothers/Barnum & Bailey Circus. And while I do not question the negative effect of the nettle caterpillar on crops in Hawaii or the desire to provide healthy environments for elephants at the circus, it defies reason that air traffic controllers would not be considered inherently government employees.

On behalf of the more than 15,000 air traffic controllers -- FAA workers, each and everyone -- I ask that you urge President Bush to prevent any efforts to privatize our nation's air traffic control system or even one of our air traffic control towers. We have the safest and most efficient air traffic control system in the world. We must all work together to keep it that way, not undermine its safety and efficiency.

Sincerely,

John S. Carr President  
National Air Traffic Controllers Association

cc: FAA Administrator Marion Blakey