



May 13, 2012

**To our fellow pilots:**

The company is continuing to work together with ALPA to reach a joint collective bargaining agreement. The mediation process has been working well, and has allowed us to make substantial progress on many sections. Sub-groups of negotiators are continuing to meet on the remaining sections, and we expect to make further progress in the weeks ahead. Both sides at the table recognize that we are getting closer to tackling the key remaining issues such as pay rates and scope. As always, our goal is to reach agreement on a competitive contract that is fair to you, and fair to the company. And we want to do that as soon as possible.

What is soon? Neither the company nor ALPA can predict or dictate a timeline for reaching a tentative agreement. That will be the result of a consensus being reached by both sides at the table.

We announced long ago that the mediator had scheduled negotiating dates through mid-June. However, recent ALPA communications have mischaracterized the mid-June timeframe as the "end" of negotiations -- by which time ALPA claims an agreement must be reached. This is simply false. There is no deadline relating to reaching a consensus on issues, and neither the company nor the NMB has agreed to any deadline. For ALPA to falsely claim the existence of a deadline without involvement or agreement from the NMB mediators or the company is not constructive, nor is it conducive to reaching a tentative agreement.

The company continues to negotiate constructively and in good faith to reach an agreement as soon as possible. We have the right people, with the right authority, at the table.

On Friday, ALPA requested to be released from mediation. We view the request to be premature and counter-productive. This approach is consistent with failed past airline union negotiating strategies which generally only serve to delay making progress. Moreover, ALPA's recent communications themselves noted that the parties have made "significant recent progress" and are "producing real results" in areas of the agreement, but that "many issues remain." Accordingly, this is a time to increase focus on negotiating, rather than on what will prove to be ineffective efforts by ALPA to discontinue mediation.

Honest dialogue and hard work with the assistance of NMB mediation will allow us to reach our goal of a joint collective bargaining agreement for our pilot co-workers. We are sticking with our plan of carrying negotiations through to a successful conclusion.

We thank you for your professionalism and your strong efforts to keep the right focus on the flight deck.

Sincerely,

**Fred Abbott and Howard Attarian**