



ASSOCIATION OF FLIGHT ATTENDANTS AFL-CIO

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October 2, 2003

Mr. Glen Tilton,
President and Chief Executive Officer
United Airlines
PO Box 66100
Chicago, IL 60666

Dear Mr. Tilton:

As you should be well aware, many of your crewmembers, and thousands of your customers, are being exposed to pesticides on board United 747-400 aircraft every day. These aircraft are sprayed in Hong Kong, in anticipation of eventually being routed to Sydney to comply with Australia's regulations that aim to prevent the import of foreign bugs. These sprayed aircraft, however, are first routed to either Chicago or San Francisco, where they continue on both domestic and international flights before flying down under. Most passengers have no idea.

We will not again review the toxicity of these pesticide products, and the risk in particular to pregnant women, infants, and people with compromised immunity. The hundreds of reports submitted by flight attendants speak for themselves. Most recently, a LA-based flight attendant reported to AFA that during a flight from Sydney – not even on a freshly sprayed aircraft – she developed hives and swollen eyes during and after spending time in the crew bunk room. Her doctor's first comment was she looked just like the migrant farm workers he treats for pesticide poisoning.

Up until now, United's position has essentially been that it has no choice but to comply with Australia's foreign quarantine regulations, and that it must spray its aircraft because there is no alternative.

We are writing to tell you that the alternative may have arrived.

Earlier this year, in response to mounting concerns over pesticide spraying on planes, the Department of Transportation (DOT) initiated an inter-agency task group that includes representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Defense, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the State Department. Their goal is to assess the efficacy and feasibility of a method of "disinsection" that could be achieved through mechanical means instead of chemical spraying.

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Since then, the inter-agency task group has approved a test protocol that includes laboratory work (Phase I) and on-aircraft testing (Phase II) of air curtain technology intended to keep insects off aircraft (or on aircraft, depending on the direction of the airflow). The World Health Organization has provided input, and Phase I has already started. We understand, however, that the DOT is still looking for a willing airline partner to participate in Phase II.

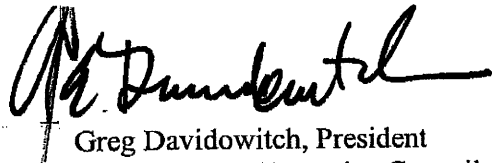
United now has an opportunity to demonstrate a willingness to investigate alternative means of compliance with Australian law. If proven effective, mechanical means of disinsection could save United money because it would no longer be necessary to pay for pesticide sprays, costly ground time, or the administrative burden of workers' compensation claims and sick leave.

This is an opportunity to listen to your employees and your customers. Flight attendants want a proven mechanical alternative. Presumably, United wants a proven mechanical alternative too. This can only happen if an airline is willing to get involved. The laboratory testing *may* indicate that air curtains are not a viable option, negating the need for on-aircraft tests; however, United would be on record for a willingness to try. We urge you to immediately contact Mr. Arnold Konheim at the DOT (202-366-4849) and accept the challenge to participate, as only a world-class airline can.

Sincerely,



Patricia A. Friend
International President



Greg Davidowitch, President
United Master Executive Council

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