

APR 03 2015

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, VA 20598



**Transportation
Security
Administration**

The Honorable Jason Chaffetz
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Chaffetz:

Thank you for your letter of March 19, 2015, regarding your concerns with Transportation Security Administration (TSA) staffing levels and checkpoint wait times at Salt Lake City International Airport (SLC). Specifically, you stated that you experienced a lengthy wait time during your travels through SLC on March 12, 2015, and noted that the TSA Pre✓[®] lane was closed during that time.

Please accept my apologies for your experience at SLC on March 12. It is common practice to conduct an operational review when we experience atypical wait times, and TSA management at SLC conducted such a review on March 13. We determined that the TSA Pre✓[®] lane was closed earlier than normal, due to the light volume based on predictive numbers. TSA management made a decision to close the TSA Pre✓[®] lane and devote resources towards the processing of passengers in standard screening lanes, causing the wait times to exceed our goal of 20 minutes or less.

TSA strives to balance effectiveness, security, and customer service while protecting the traveling public. TSA management will continue to monitor the TSA Pre✓[®] lane operational hours to better manage our wait times and provide expedited screening to eligible passengers for a longer duration.

Overall, SLC has been a success story, thanks to the hard work of our personnel and operational efficiencies realized through risk-based security initiatives. For example, even though SLC saw an increase in passenger volume of more than 10 percent this quarter (compared to the same time last year), we were able to provide wait times of less than 20 minutes to 99.89 percent of those passengers. This is an improvement over last year. Less than one percent of passengers have experienced wait times longer than 20 minutes, either as the result of unusual events that cannot be predicted or adjustments in lanes.

The increase in passenger volume at SLC is consistent with TSA's projections, and staffing levels there take into consideration these projections. As you may be aware, we formulate our budgeted personnel distributions based on a modeling approach that ensures consistency across all airports and includes variables such as airport layout, flight loads, and equipment types. We continuously evaluate passenger volume as the year goes on to ensure staffing levels meet required volume need. SLC is one such airport that we continue to monitor in the event volume exceeds the level of growth we anticipated.

Risk-based security initiatives, such as TSA Pre✓[®], have produced significant savings and efficiencies nationwide. The savings in staffing was applied equitably through our workforce utilization modeling process. While SLC did see a staffing decrease from the same period last year, this decrease was in line with other similarly sized airports.

I appreciate that you took the time to share your concerns with me and hope this information is helpful. I look forward to working with you on this and other homeland security issues in the future. For more detailed answers to the specific inquiries in your letter, please see the enclosed attachment. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me personally or the Office of Legislative Affairs at (571) 227-2717.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melvin J. Carraway', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Melvin J. Carraway
Acting Administrator

Enclosure