

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2309

March 8, 2016

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
128 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Hoeven and Ranking Member Shaheen:

News reports across the country have highlighted the especially significant delays and long wait lines travelers have been enduring at airport TSA security checkpoints recently. Nowhere has this been more of a problem than at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP). Therefore, I respectfully request strong FY2017 funding for the TSA to address any staffing deficiencies and reduce the wait times at TSA security checkpoints.

According to the TSA, long lines are a result of reduced staffing from federal budget cuts, an uptick in travelers, and an effort to fix significant breakdowns in screening. The average number of people per flight rose from 75 in 2010 to 91 in 2015, resulting in more travelers passing through security, and yet TSA staffing levels have actually decreased. Currently there are about 41,000 screeners, below the congressionally mandated cap of 42,500. Even if the TSA were staffed up to the cap, it would have 5600 fewer screeners than in 2011, down almost 12 percent. The combination of more travelers and fewer screeners has placed greater pressure on TSA security checkpoints, and the result has been longer wait lines. Wait times have reached nearly 60 minutes at MSP. This is unacceptable.

MSP is vital to the Minnesota economy, and it is essential that it operate at maximum efficiency. Minnesotans should be able to travel without the fear that they will miss their flights due to especially long security lines.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. I look forward to working with you to address this matter as quickly as possible. Our constituents deserve efficient, operational airports that screen passengers in a timely manner.

Sincerely,



Al Franken  
United States Senator