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Aviation Group Client Update

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GAO REPORT ON U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION (CBP) INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL PROCESS

On May 1, 2017, the GAO released a [report](#) with its findings of a study performed on CBP's international air travel process specific to strengthening the reporting of airport wait times.

Background. CBP, along with airports and airline stakeholders, implement travel and tourism initiatives at U.S. international airports to facilitate the arrival of travelers. In this regard, CBP has two airport travel facilitation goals: (1) to improve customer service levels for international arrivals and (2) to maintain or reduce wait times—and has implemented mechanisms to assess and obtain feedback on the traveler experience. CBP monitors airport wait times and reports data on its public website to help travelers plan flights, including scheduling connecting flights.

Summary. This report focuses on: (1) how CBP and stakeholders have implemented airport travel and tourism facilitation initiatives, (2) how CBP and stakeholders manage staff to facilitate the traveler entry process, and (3) the extent to which CBP has mechanisms to monitor and report wait times at U.S. international airports. GAO's study focused on 17 of the busiest U.S. international airports associated with the president's National Travel and Tourism Strategy.

Findings. GAO found that CBP's data reports on airport wait times have limited usefulness to travelers because the data fails to report wait times by traveler type, such as U.S. citizen or foreign visitor, and instead represents average hourly wait times for all travelers on arriving international flights. Thus, the wait times reported are lower than those generally experienced by visitors. Per GAO's analysis of CBP's wait time data reported for the 17 airports from May 2013 through August 2016, the average wait time was 13 minutes for U.S. citizens and 28 minutes for visitors, while the combined reported average wait time was 21 minutes.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Shelley Ewalt.

McBreen & Kopko's Aviation Group represents air carriers, fixed base operators (FBOs), airport managers, aviation service providers, and business aircraft owners and operators on a wide range of aviation issues including regulatory matters, commercial transactions, aircraft finance matters, and bankruptcy and creditors' rights.