

Statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Michael A. Lawson
Ambassador-designate to the International Civil Aviation Organization
February 4, 2014

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the Representative of the United States to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). I am honored to be here and am grateful to President Obama for the trust and confidence he has shown in nominating me for this important position and for the opportunity to serve my country at ICAO.

From the time of the negotiations in the United States at the end of World War II that resulted in the Chicago Convention and the creation of ICAO as the specialized agency of the United Nations devoted to civil aviation, the United States and ICAO have enjoyed an extraordinarily close and mutually beneficial relationship. ICAO is the only forum in which global standards can be set for all aspects of international civil aviation. Whatever the new developments or challenges in the areas of civil aviation safety, security, and the environment, ICAO provides the mechanisms and the opportunity to address them effectively through the cooperation of Member States.

If confirmed, I will bring the cumulative skills and totality of my professional experiences to this role. I have spent the majority of my professional career as a transactional attorney at the international law firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate Meagher & Flom LLP where I served for 31 years.

In addition to that experience, I have served since 2005 on the seven-member Board of Airport Commissioners of the Los Angeles World Airports, which oversees the operations of Los Angeles International Airport, Van Nuys General Aviation Airport ; Ontario International Airport; and Palmdale Airport. In December of 2010, I was asked to serve as the President of the Board, a position in which I remained until August of 2013.

The Board of Airport Commissioners is responsible for promoting the safety and security of the more than 60 million passengers who travel through its airports on an annual basis. Those responsibilities extend to the efficient and effective day-to-day operations of the airports, including environmental sustainability issues.

I am proud to say that during my tenure on the Board, we initiated the largest public works project in the history of the city of Los Angeles - a \$6 billion capital improvement program designed to return LAX to a world class status worthy of the

third busiest airport in the country and the sixth busiest airport in the world. Those improvements include a new international terminal, 19 new gates, and upgrades designed to accommodate the next generation of large passenger aircraft. Given the program's enormous and complex scale, I take particular pride in highlighting the responsible, efficient, and transparent manner in which it has been managed.

As a direct result of my experiences on the Board of Commissioners, I am keenly aware of the many challenges associated with ensuring the safety and security of airline passengers. For this reason, I am proud to have been actively involved in the selection of the excellent team providing on the ground leadership, including executive director, Ms. Gina Marie Lindsay and the current chief of the airport police department, Chief Patrick Gannon. That team was tested on November 1 when a gunman entered Terminal 3 of LAX with the apparent intent of attacking and killing TSA employees. While I have no formal insights into the tragic events of that day, it is clear to me that the exceptional professionalism and integration I saw among the various federal and law enforcement agencies that are present at LAX saved many lives.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, if confirmed, I believe the experience I have gained as a member and president of the Board of Commissioners as well as the skills accrued over three decades in the legal profession will prove relevant and valuable in representing the United States as the permanent representative to ICAO.

Throughout its history, ICAO has principally devoted its attention to activities involving air safety and air navigation issues. The recent events at LAX only underscore that aviation security is an unceasing task. If confirmed, I will work diligently to advance America's priorities at ICAO, and ensure that ICAO continues to play an active and leading role in developing and implementing international aviation security standards.

My experience has also made me keenly aware of the environmental impact of air travel. ICAO is already undertaking a great deal of work in this regard. Technical groups are developing noise and efficiency standards for aircraft, and are beginning work on the development of a global market-based measure for international aviation CO₂ emissions. If confirmed, I will continue my predecessor's focus on ensuring that ICAO's environmental standards are technologically feasible, environmentally beneficial, and economically sustainable with continued expansion of international aviation.

If confirmed, I am also committed to bringing continued attention to good governance and increased efficiency at ICAO. I will actively pursue the U.S. government's goals with regard to budget discipline, transparency, and

accountability in all areas, including ethics rules, fair procurement practices, financial disclosure for senior officials, and whistleblower protection.

The agenda of the United States in ICAO is extensive and vitally important. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this Committee to advance our nation's interests.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to any questions you may have.