



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

Senator Hoylman's Testimony Before the Port Authority Board Regarding a Wage and Benefits Plan for Airport Workers

Brad Hoylman

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I represent the 27th State Senate District in Manhattan and am the Ranking Member of the Government Operations and Investigations Committee of the New York State Senate.

LaGuardia Airport, which is crucial to the Metro Region's economy, unfortunately is consistently ranked among the worst airports in the nation by international travelers. It's good news therefore that the Port Authority Board is bringing the rehabilitation project for LaGuardia closer to reality. The announcement of a winner for this multi-billion dollar contract is the first step in transforming the airport's dilapidated facilities into a twenty-first century transportation hub.

A modern airport, however, also requires modern labor conditions. Nearly 12,000 airport workers in New York and New Jersey are currently waiting on a promised wage and benefits plan from the Port Authority that is nearly nine months overdue. This is unacceptable. The wheelchair assistants, baggage handlers, security officers, terminal cleaners and cabin cleaners who work at LaGuardia Airport are essential to the airport's operations. The proposed physical makeover of La Guardia will be nearly meaningless unless the Port Authority provides decent wages, allowing it to attract qualified personnel in these areas to help improve LaGuardia's poor reputation among travelers.

As the upgrade moves forward, I urge the Port Authority to abide by prevailing wage standards for the resulting construction jobs, as well as for the continuing operational work of security, cleaning, and baggage handling. Investments in the rehabilitation of our transportation infrastructure must be accompanied by investments in our workforce.

I appreciate your time and consideration, and thank you again for the opportunity to comment.