

## Slaughter Invites Local Business Leaders to Washington to Reduce the High Cost of Airfare

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) invited executives from Western New York-area businesses to the Department of Transportation yesterday in an effort to reduce airline prices in and out of the Rochester and Buffalo airports noting that with better transportation options comes a more vibrant local economy.

Slaughter started the conversation between the business leaders and US Airways. She was joined by Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood.

“Rochester and Buffalo are home to extraordinary corporations and world-class research institutions. I know that they need access to our nation’s capital to make sure they have access to federal grants and the agencies that allow them to thrive. Right now exorbitant flight costs are impeding them and that’s a problem,” said Slaughter. “Reliable and affordable transportation options are vital to our local economy. It allows the businesses we have to grow and gives us a powerful recruitment tool in bringing the businesses of tomorrow to our hometown.”

Following the meeting, local business leaders pledged to continue talking with the airline.

“I’m pleased that this conversation will continue between the Western New York business community and I thank U.S. Air for their willingness to discuss the vital matter,” said Slaughter.

“A persistent issue of concern we hear from our members is the high cost of airfare to select locations,” said Sandra Parker, President and CEO of the Rochester Business Alliance. “While great strides have been made over the past decade in expanding the mix of carriers at Rochester International Airport and reducing airfares to a number of destinations through increased competition, employers are still paying exorbitant fees to fly to Washington. I believe that increased competition will lower airfares and increase passenger traffic helping not only the Greater Rochester employer community, but US Airways as well.”

Slaughter has been a champion of low-cost airlines coming into Rochester and Buffalo. Nearly ten years ago she helped JetBlue acquire slots needed to fly between Upstate New York and New York City. This lowered fares in Upstate over night, launched JetBlue, and convinced other low-cost carriers to serve our region And ushered in other low-cost carriers like AirTran. In January, Slaughter wrote a letter to Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood and Federal Aviation Administrator Randy Babbitt asking that Washington’s Regan National Airport be required to hold more flight slots for low-cost carriers like AirTran, JetBlue and Southwest, resulting in a deal that required more slots for low-cost carriers.