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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Schumer Reveals: Upstate NY Air Traffic Controller Shortage Growing – Towers Already 25 Percent Understaffed

With air service on the rise in communities across upstate New York, U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer revealed that there are potentially 25 percent fewer air traffic controllers watching the skies over New York this year than there should be. Schumer will say that, with air service growing, fewer controllers watching more flights could lead to delays, close calls, and even disaster. One of the primary reasons for this shortage is the growing number of air traffic controllers who are retiring. In the past, between 1 and 2 % of the controller workforce became eligible for retirement each year, that number will reach 10 percent in 2007. In just the last week, 100 air traffic controllers across the country have already retired.

According to the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, in upstate New York, there are currently only 164 controllers watching the skies, including in-house trainees and controllers on medical leave, instead of the 192 authorized by the FAA.

Albany International Airport

Active Controllers	Trainees or Controllers on Medical Leave	FAA Authorized Staffing Level	Controllers who Could Retire This Year
26	1	30	7

Number of Controllers Short After Retirements: 20
Potential Percentage Shortfall This Year: 33%

Total Commercial Flights in 2002: 14,000
Total Commercial Flights in 2006: 15,000

Syracuse-Hancock International Airport

Active Controllers	Trainees or Controllers on Medical Leave	FAA Authorized Staffing Level	Controllers who Could Retire This Year
20	2	30	1

Number of Controllers Short After Retirements: 21
Potential Percentage Shortfall This Year: 25%

Total Commercial Flights in 2002: 9,000
Total Commercial Flights in 2006: 12,000

Rochester International Airport

Active Controllers	Trainees or Controllers on Medical Leave	FAA Authorized Staffing Level	Controllers who Could Retire This Year
24	2	30	2

Number of Controllers Short After Retirements: 24
Potential Percentage Shortfall This Year: 20%

Total Commercial Flights in 2002: 9,000
Total Commercial Flights in 2006: 18,000

White Plains/Westchester Airport

Active Controllers	Trainees or Controllers on Medical Leave	FAA Authorized Staffing Level	Controllers who Could Retire This Year
15	1	18	2

Number of Controllers Short After Retirements: 14
Potential Percentage Shortfall This Year: 22%

Total Commercial Flights in 2002: 6,000
Total Commercial Flights in 2006: 7,000

Stewart International Airport

Active Controllers	Trainees or Controllers on Medical Leave	FAA Authorized Staffing Level	Controllers who Could Retire This Year
9	0	12	4

Number of Controllers Short After Retirements: 5
Potential Percentage Shortfall This Year: 54%

Total Commercial Flights in 2002: 1,000
Total Commercial Flights in 2006: 1,000

Binghamton International Airport

Active Controllers	Trainees or Controllers on Medical Leave	FAA Authorized Staffing Level	Controllers who Could Retire This Year
11	1	17	2

Number of Controllers Short After Retirements: 10
Potential Percentage Shortfall This Year: 40%

Total Commercial Flights in 2002: <1,000
Total Commercial Flights in 2006: 1,000

Buffalo International Airport

Active Controllers	Trainees or Controllers on Medical Leave	FAA Authorized Staffing Level	Controllers who Could Retire This Year
29	1	30	4

Number of Controllers Short After Retirements: 26
Potential Percentage Shortfall This Year: 15%

Total Commercial Flights in 2002: 16,000
Total Commercial Flights in 2006: 27,000

***Air traffic controllers staffing numbers provided by the National Air Traffic Controllers Association. Commercial flight statistics provided by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics.