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Served: February 8, 2000

U.S. Department of
Transportation
Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

Dated: February 8, 2000

NOTICE

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Docket OST-2000-6821, United States Travel Agent Registry

On January 24, 2000, the United States Travel Agent Registry (USTAR) filed a document labeled as a petition for rulemaking in Docket OST-1000-6821. USTAR alleges violations of 49 U.S.C. §41712, which prohibits unfair and deceptive practices and unfair methods of competition, on the part of Deutsche Lufthansa AG d/b/a Lufthansa German Airlines (Lufthansa), the International Air Transportation Association (IATA), American Airlines, Inc. (American), Continental Airlines, Inc. (Continental), Delta Air Lines, Inc. (Delta), Northwest Airlines, Inc. (Northwest), and United Air Lines, Inc. (United). On January 28, we issued a notice stating that we would treat USTAR's petition as a formal complaint and that answers would be due on Monday, February 14.

On February 4, by fax and e-mail, IATA stated that it would need additional time to gather enough information to answer USTAR's complaint in detail rather than simply submit a general denial, and it asked that the due date be extended to March 10. Within an hour, Delta answered by e-mail in support of IATA's request, stating that three major international route cases have due dates within the next several weeks, making it impossible for counsel to respond to USTAR's complaint by February 14 as well. Subsequently, American, Continental, and Northwest communicated their support for IATA's request by e-mail, while United did so by telephone. In a responsive e-mail, USTAR stated that it would not oppose an extension of two weeks but believes that the four weeks requested by IATA is excessive in light of the harm to consumers alleged in its complaint.

We will extend the due date for answers to USTAR's complaint to March 10 as requested. The complaint is complex, it raises novel issues, and a four-week extension will not significantly delay its processing.

We will serve this Notice on USTAR, Lufthansa, IATA, American, Continental, Delta, Northwest, and United.

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