UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

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FY11 CITY PAIR PROGRAM PRE-SOLICITATION CONFERENCE

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2010

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The conference convened at 12:30 P.M. in conference room L1303 of 2200 Crystal Drive, Arlington, Virginia, Jerome Bristow, Event Facilitator, presiding.

GSA CPP STAFF PRESENT:

JEROME BRISTOW, Event Facilitator,
Program Manager

JERRY ELLIS, Business Management Specialist

KRISTEN JAREMBACK, Contracting Officer

KWANITA BROWN, Contract Specialist

FRANK ROBINSON, FAS Acting Division Director, Center for Travel Management

- 1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
- 2 12:33 p.m.
- 3 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: On the
- 4 record. Good afternoon, everyone and welcome
- 5 to the FY11 City Pair Pre-Solicitation
- 6 Conference. We'd like to welcome and thank
- 7 you for joining us here not only in person but
- 8 also on the telephone. Shortly here, we'll be
- 9 conducting a roll call for attendance.
- 10 I just wanted to advise everyone
- 11 that this pre-solicitation conference is being
- 12 recorded. This is for all of our benefits to
- 13 ensure that we cover all of the salient issues
- 14 as well as the open discussions that we'll
- 15 have for the pre-solicitation conference.
- 16 Again, welcome and we thank you for coming.
- To start us off, I'd like to have
- 18 Frank Robinson actually give the introduction
- 19 --
- 20 MR. ROBINSON: Can we do the roll
- 21 call?
- 22 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Okay. We

- 1 can do the roll call first. We'll start over
- 2 here with our esteemed people from the City
- 3 Pair Team, Jerry Ellis.
- 4 MR. ELLIS: Good afternoon, ladies
- 5 and gentlemen. Jerry Ellis, GSA City Pair
- 6 Team.
- 7 MS. BROWN: Kwanita Brown, City
- 8 Pair Team, Contract Specialist.
- 9 MS. JAREMBACK: Kristen Jaremback,
- 10 Contracting Officer, City Pair Team.
- 11 MR. SZNAJDER: Gary Sznajder,
- 12 Continental Airlines.
- MR. ROBINSON: Frank Robinson,
- 14 Acting Director of the Center for Travel
- 15 Management.
- MR. JOHNSON: Jay Johnson, DoD, US
- 17 TransCom.
- 18 MR. CASE: Don Case, TO
- 19 [Transportation Officer] of the AMC.
- 20 MS. SIZEMORE: Patti Sizemore,
- 21 DoD, AMC.
- 22 MS. CARSON: Good afternoon.

- 1 Kathy Carson, Center for Travel Management.
- 2 MR. JUNK: Josh Junk, AirTran
- 3 Airways.
- 4 MR. McMAHON: Kevin McMahon,
- 5 AirTran Airways.
- 6 MS. GULICK: Barbara Gulick, NSF.
- 7 MS. BRYANT: Kimberly Bryant, NSF.
- 8 MR. COYLE: George Coyle, American
- 9 Airlines.
- 10 MR. DERAWIN: Kevin Derawin,
- 11 Department of Justice.
- 12 MR. VAN HORN: Chris Van Horn, DoD
- 13 DTMO.
- MR. STAEFE: Klaus Staefe, NASA.
- MR. CLIFFORD: Denny Clifford with
- 16 Delta Airlines.
- 17 MS. SISSON: Sara Sisson, Delta
- 18 Airlines.
- MR. BILLONE: Tom Billone, United
- 20 Airlines.
- 21 MR. TUTONI: Vincent Tutoni,
- 22 Secret Service.

- 1 MR. FLYNN: Craig Flynn with GSA,
- 2 Office of Government wide Travel Policy.
- 3 MR. DELLINGER: Mark Dellinger,
- 4 Department of State.
- 5 MS. ROBINSON: Cynthia Robinson,
- 6 U.S. Marine Corps.
- 7 MR. KESSI: Matthew Kessi, Alaska
- 8 Airlines.
- 9 MR. McGRIFF: Shawn McGriff, Navy.
- 10 (Several people introduced off
- 11 microphone.)
- 12 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Missed one
- 13 up front.
- 14 MR. FLYNN: David Flynn,
- 15 Department of Health and Human Services.
- 16 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: I'm Jerry
- 17 Bristow, your facilitator for GSA, and now
- 18 we'll go to the phone for roll call on the
- 19 phone please.
- 20 MS. SINGLETARY: Lisa Singletary,
- 21 U.S. Department of Commerce.
- 22 MS. PRESLEY-DOSS: Carolyn

- 1 Presley-Doss, GSA.
- 2 MR. MALLIK: Abe Mallik, HHS.
- 3 MS. ELS: Cheryl Els, Department
- 4 of Commerce.
- 5 MR. HAAG: Jeff Haag with
- 6 Southwest Airlines.
- 7 MS. ULLRICH: Rebecca Ullrich,
- 8 Midwest Airlines.
- 9 MR. CAVOS: Donna Cavos, Frontier
- 10 Airlines.
- MR. GOODMANN: Tony Goodmann,
- 12 Virgin America.
- MR. VANSELOW: Debbie Vanselow,
- 14 EPA.
- 15 MS. THORN: Umeki Thorn,
- 16 Department of Energy.
- 17 MR. CONROZZA: Dan Conrozza,
- 18 Treasury/Public Debt.
- MR. GAMMAN: Chris Gamman, U.S.
- 20 Airways.
- MR. OCLECH: Josh Oclech, SSA.
- MR. ROSENMEIER: Jon Rosenmeier,

- 1 VA.
- 2 MR. CLAYTON: Whitney Clayton,
- 3 Army G4.
- 4 MR. LOSSIER: Scott Lossier with
- 5 JetBlue Airways.
- 6 MR. GAINES: Joy Gaines, NIH.
- 7 MR. ELLIS: Okay. Do we have
- 8 anybody else on the phone please?
- 9 (No verbal response.)
- 10 Okay. Thank you very much. Again
- 11 people on the phone please put your phones on
- 12 mute unless you're asking a question or making
- 13 a statement. Thank you.
- 14 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Again thank
- 15 you all for your attendance today. Once
- 16 again, I just wanted to advise. We do this on
- 17 a yearly basis. So we're almost like
- 18 Groundhog Day I guess. Today is Groundhog as
- 19 well, but we do this on a yearly basis and we
- 20 like to meet here to discuss the issues for
- 21 the new City Pair Awards, not only what's of
- 22 concern to our government travelers but also

- 1 what's a concern of the air carriers. And
- 2 then how this impacts our City Pair contracts.
- 3 So without further ado I'm going
- 4 to introduce Frank Robinson to welcome us on
- 5 board here.
- 6 MR. ROBINSON: Well, good
- 7 afternoon, everyone. One housekeeping thing
- 8 real quickly and I've already broken this
- 9 rule. I'm Frank Robinson with GSA. As you
- 10 make comments today or discussions, please
- 11 state your name and who you're with so that
- 12 the court reporter can pick all that up.
- 13 Okay.
- 14 But I want to start by welcoming
- 15 everybody here this afternoon. Especially
- 16 appreciate the participation by the air
- 17 carriers who have made this program
- 18 successful, but as well as our customers both
- 19 here and on the phone who really it's their
- 20 requirements that are represented in this
- 21 solicitation. The GSA does the procurement,
- 22 but we're really here representing the needs

- 1 of our customers in the Federal agencies and
- 2 in Department of Defense. So appreciate
- 3 everybody taking time today to come to the
- 4 solicitation conference.
- 5 This is the 30th solicitation for
- 6 the Contract City Pair Program. It started in
- 7 1980 with 13 markets, one-three markets.
- 8 Okay. In FY10, we awarded a little over 5,000
- 9 markets. I think 5,003 to be precise is where
- 10 we settled at. So 30 years of customer-
- 11 community getting together with the airlines
- 12 to ensure that we have a vibrant City Pair
- 13 Program for the Federal Government.
- 14 There's a number of issues that
- 15 we're going to be continuing to work through
- 16 and some of which are reflected in the
- 17 requirements, minor qualifications that will
- 18 be discussed today. The airline industry has
- 19 reduced capacity. Some routes are no longer
- 20 flown at all. And those capacity changes are
- 21 going to or have already impacted connecting
- 22 time for example that needs to be allowed for

- 1 passengers and their luggage to make
- 2 connections both domestically and overseas.
- Fuel surcharges. Those on the
- 4 phone I am knocking on wood. Have abated
- 5 somewhat here in the past year or so and we
- 6 hope that continues. But we're ever vigilant
- 7 to that issue as well.
- 8 Baggage fees and ancillary fees.
- 9 Increasingly a significant percentage of the
- 10 total cost of travel resides in these
- 11 ancillary fees versus the airfare. I think
- 12 some of the baggage, first baggage, fees \$7 to
- 13 \$35 here recently. On a round trip that's \$70
- 14 for one bag on a \$300 airfare. That's a
- 15 pretty substantial percentage of the total
- 16 cost. So I think that's going to continue to
- 17 be a concern.
- 18 Secure flight. I believe that
- 19 most of the travel agencies and the ETS
- 20 vendors are able to handle the secure flight
- 21 data that the airlines need to pass on to TSA
- 22 and the secure flight program folks. So that

- 1 appears to be going well. But if the industry
- 2 in particular has any comments on the TMC
- 3 communities and the ETS vendor communities
- 4 available to pass this data through we would
- 5 certainly welcome hearing about that.
- 6 And then finally I think -- Well,
- 7 not finally. Two more points. In our last
- 8 meeting, I think it was Tom Billone with
- 9 United brought up that the European Union was
- 10 considering some sort of surcharge or carbon
- 11 emissions recovery fee that would be part of
- 12 the airfares. We see that as a continuing
- 13 point that we're going to keep our finger on
- 14 the pulse on and continue to observe with our
- 15 airline partners.
- 16 But greenhouse gas emissions in
- 17 general. The President signed an Executive
- 18 Order requiring the agencies to baseline their
- 19 greenhouse emissions for travel that occurred
- 20 in 2008. GSA Travel MIS Program has the
- 21 capacity to do that for those agencies who we
- 22 receive their travel agency data. But that

- 1 will continue to be a focus point and may
- 2 become a bigger consideration for CPP in the
- 3 future. We don't foresee any changes really
- 4 in the FY11 solicitation in that area.
- 5 So in closing I just want to say
- 6 that the Government certainly strives to be a
- 7 good customer to the airline industry. Over
- 8 72 percent of the traffic of the Government's
- 9 air travel was on either YCA or _CA fare.
- 10 Another 16 percent was on YDG fares. So we've
- 11 got some 78 percent of the Government's travel
- 12 taking place on official Government fares. So
- 13 88. Did I say 78? I'm sorry. Thanks, Jerry.
- 14 Eighty-eight percent.
- 15 We'll continue to look forward to
- 16 getting the fares and the service that will
- 17 inspire our customers and our agencies to
- 18 continue to use and value the program.
- 19 With that, I'm going to turn it
- 20 back to Jerry Bristow. Are there any
- 21 questions from you while I'm up here?
- 22 (No verbal response.)

- Good. Well, I explained that one.
- 2 Okay. Thank you all very much.
- FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Thank you,
- 4 Frank. I appreciate that.
- We're going to move right on to
- 6 the agenda here. Well, we are a little bit
- 7 slow. There it is. We're going to be doing a
- 8 --
- 9 MR. ELLIS: Slide two.
- 10 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: We're on
- 11 slide two please. We're going to do a review
- 12 of the general requirements. Under Section
- 13 B.1, we're going to show the changes in
- 14 definitions. Under Section B.9, changes in
- 15 the maximum connecting times. Section B.36,
- 16 we're going to do some review of the activity
- 17 reporting and then we'll show the FY11 market
- 18 selection. The City Pair Program website, the
- 19 City Pair Program Points of contact and
- 20 general inquiries. And then we'll open the
- 21 floor for any further discussions or comments
- 22 that you may have along the way.

- I believe the first to come up
- 2 will be Kwanita Brown and she's going to do
- 3 the review of the general requirements for
- 4 Attachment 1.
- 5 MS. BROWN: Good afternoon,
- 6 everybody. Again, my name is Kwanita Brown.
- 7 I'm the Contract Specialist on the City Pair
- 8 Program.
- 9 So on this first slide in regards
- 10 to the general requirements, within the RFP
- 11 there is a proposal checklist which you can
- 12 use to sort of guide you through the process
- 13 of completing your technical submissions.
- 14 Basically, it will just itemize everything
- 15 that you need to submit in paper format.
- 16 There have been no changes to the
- 17 proposal checklist, but you do want to note
- 18 that paper submissions are due by 3:00 p.m. on
- 19 March 25th. Those should be mailed or
- 20 couriered over and just note that they do have
- 21 to go through a screening process. So you
- 22 want to keep that in mind when you're sending

- 1 those submissions.
- 2 Another thing that you want to
- 3 take note of is your CCR and ORCA
- 4 registrations. You want to make sure that
- 5 you're up to date or if you need to renew make
- 6 sure you renew your registration prior to
- 7 submission of your technical and price
- 8 proposals.
- 9 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Do those
- 10 come out yearly for renewal? Do they send out
- 11 a request or do they actually have to go in?
- MS. BROWN: I believe you have to
- 13 go in and maintain that. I haven't heard of
- 14 anything where they actually send out a notice
- 15 for renewal. So you just want to make sure
- 16 you go in as you're putting together your
- 17 packet and your proposal. Make sure you're
- 18 going into the system to make sure all that
- 19 information is current and up to date.
- 20 Okay. The next slide talks about
- 21 COPS or the City Pair Offer Preparation
- 22 System. This is the online system that we use

- 1 for the submission of our technical and price
- 2 proposals. It is a system that requires a
- 3 user name and a password. So for all the
- 4 airline carriers towards the end of February
- 5 there will be an email that gets sent out
- 6 requesting to know who the users are that you
- 7 want to have access to the system. We'll
- 8 create a user name and a password for those
- 9 particular representatives.
- 10 And then what will happen is
- 11 there's a three phase to the online system.
- 12 We start out with a COPS test application.
- 13 This allows your users to go into the system
- in a test format and just get familiar with
- 15 the system. Get familiar with uploading your
- 16 offers and just get comfortable with
- 17 everything.
- We're going to open up COPS for
- 19 that test application on March 1st which is a
- 20 Monday and we're going to close it at the end
- 21 of the week on Friday, March 5th. We're going
- 22 to then reopen COPS on March 8th and that's

- 1 when it's going to be when we're going to go
- 2 into live production. At that time, you will
- 3 start submitting your proposals for the Group
- 4 1 and extended markets and that system and
- 5 live production for Group 1 upload will remain
- 6 open until Thursday, March 25th at which time
- 7 we will close the system and we'll start
- 8 computating and generating those reports. We
- 9 will then reopen up COPS for the Group 2 offer
- 10 upload on March 29th and again we will close
- 11 it again on April 13th.
- 12 One of the main things I do want
- 13 to stress for the COPS system is that
- 14 typically we have a lot of airline carriers
- 15 wait until the very last minute close to the
- 16 deadline to actually submit their offers. If
- 17 it's possible to sort of have that done
- 18 earlier rather than waiting until the last
- 19 day, we may not have as much congestion with
- 20 the system. So just keep that in mind as
- 21 you're submitting your offers. I know last
- 22 year we did have some issues with that. So if

- 1 you're able to sort of get those offers in
- 2 quicker that would be great.
- 3 Any questions on this or should I
- 4 move forward?
- 5 MR. ELLIS: That was slide four.
- 6 MS. BROWN: Okay. Now we're on
- 7 slide 5 which is the last part of the review
- 8 of general requirements. This deals with the
- 9 subcontracting plan renewal. Back in November
- 10 of last year there was an email that went out
- 11 to about eight of the airlines carriers who
- 12 follow a commercial plan for their
- 13 subcontracting plan.
- 14 And pretty much what the
- 15 commercial plan is that this plan follows your
- 16 fiscal year. And we do the renewal about 60
- 17 days out. And once that happens then your
- 18 plan will go into effect usually from January
- 19 1st to December 31st.
- 20 We also have an individual plan
- 21 which we have two carriers that follow that
- 22 plan. That plan follows our contract period

- 1 which is October 1st until September 30th and
- 2 also follows any option periods that we're in.
- And just to note for this, there
- 4 are report requirements for the
- 5 subcontracting plans. There are two types of
- 6 reports that are to be submitted and basically
- 7 they're supposed to be submitted in our
- 8 electronic subcontracting reporting system or
- 9 eSRS. We have the Individual Subcontract
- 10 Report which is required for those carriers
- 11 who submit an individual plan.
- 12 At the bottom here for the
- 13 reporting periods, it will indicate to you
- 14 when you're supposed to submit them and for
- 15 what period of time. So if you are submitting
- 16 an individual plan which again covers the
- 17 contract period, you want to make sure that
- 18 you're submitting an individual subcontract
- 19 report for April 30th and then also by October
- 20 30th. And the one for April 30th is going to
- 21 cover the period of October 1st through March
- 22 31st and the one for October 30th will cover

- 1 April 1st through September 30th.
- 2 For those individuals who are
- 3 submitting this on a commercial plan as well
- 4 as those who are submitting an individual plan
- 5 it basically is for all offerors you have to
- 6 submit a Summary Subcontract Report and that
- 7 has to be submitted by October 30th and it
- 8 covers the entire government's fiscal year.
- 9 So basically when you're reporting
- 10 your numbers you're reporting actual
- 11 accomplishments. You're taking a look at your
- 12 goals and then also looking at what you
- 13 actually spent on your subcontracting for that
- 14 fiscal year and you're reporting that in that
- 15 summary subcontract report.
- 16 Now last year and also up until
- 17 January I sent out several emails to your
- 18 points of contact within your airlines who
- 19 work on the subcontracting plan. So they
- 20 should be familiar with reporting. If you do
- 21 need any further clarification feel free to
- 22 give me a call, send me an email, and I'll be

- 1 more than happy to explain this any further.
- 2 And just another reiterance. For
- 3 the electronic subcontracting reporting
- 4 system, you want to make sure that when you're
- 5 submitting these reports that you're
- 6 submitting a copy to Kristen Jaremback, the
- 7 Contracting Officer. And you want to also
- 8 submit a report to myself so that we're
- 9 notified when that happens so we can go in and
- 10 look at those reports and approve them.
- 11 Any questions that I can answer
- 12 right now? Tom.
- MR. BILLONE: Tom Billone, United
- 14 Airlines. All this information has been
- 15 passed to the people that we gave as point of
- 16 contacts. So they're aware of this schedule.
- 17 MS. BROWN: Yes. Do I need to
- 18 wait for --
- 19 (Off the record comments.)
- 20 Do I need to wait for it? Can you
- 21 hear me?
- 22 That's correct. All of the points

- 1 of contact for the airline carriers who I work
- 2 with for the subcontracting plan renewal have
- 3 been notified. As of right now, I have eight
- 4 airline carriers who are already in
- 5 compliance. You've already renewed your
- 6 subcontracting plans. I only have three
- 7 additional carriers who will need to renew
- 8 their plans for this upcoming FY11
- 9 solicitation because they follow a different
- 10 time. One has a different commercial fiscal
- 11 year and the other two follow our contract
- 12 period. So everyone else is in compliance and
- 13 all this information has been forwarded to
- 14 your points of contact.
- MR. BILLONE: Okay.
- 16 MS. BROWN: Now we're on slide six
- 17 which is section B talking about the changes
- in our definition section. The first change
- 19 that we have was to include a definition for
- 20 churning and the definition reads "the
- 21 excessive changing, rebooking and canceling of
- 22 the same itinerary in the same Passenger Name

- 1 Record or PNR in order to hold the
- 2 reservation."
- 3 And basically this was a generic
- 4 definition that our PMO Office received from
- 5 the carriers to include into our RFP. The
- 6 definition refers to commercial type fares
- 7 where there has been a change that was made to
- 8 avoid a penalty or a fee. And we do want to
- 9 solicit from the airline carriers and the
- 10 industry in general if you do have any better
- 11 -- like any suggestions for a better way to
- 12 define this. We're more than happy to receive
- 13 those from you in terms of trying to
- 14 incorporate that into the RFP for the final
- 15 solicitation.
- MR. ACQUILINO: Let me just say we
- 17 apologize for moving this back and forth like
- 18 a relay. Our facilities people tell us
- 19 there's only one microphone that can be used
- 20 in this room. So we apologize.
- 21 MR. STAEFE: I'm Klaus Staefe with
- 22 NASA. Should churning really be part of CPP?

- 1 Should it not be something that GSA should be
- 2 looking at the eTravel providers to police
- 3 that so that the churning part of it won't
- 4 happen?
- 5 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Thank you
- 6 very much. There's been an ongoing discussion
- 7 that we've been having with the travel
- 8 agencies, the TMCs, the CTOs, the airlines,
- 9 participants, the ETS vendors, and then the
- 10 City Pair Program. One of the areas that's
- 11 arisen out of this is that each of those areas
- 12 take responsibility for their area in this
- 13 process.
- 14 ETS churning inside the record or
- 15 as they say problem with the system. TMCs
- 16 churning of the reservation within the same
- 17 record. Airlines now have the technology and
- 18 the capability to be tracking churning,
- 19 churning on a commercial basis as there are
- 20 people that are trying to avoid ticketing at
- 21 that time by churning that record, changing
- 22 the dates, to avoid that ticketing time limit.

- 1 We do not have ticketing time
- 2 limits within the City Pair Program. We have
- 3 no change fees, no cancellation penalties and
- 4 they're totally refundable. We're looking to
- 5 try to enhance the City Pair Program by having
- 6 a definition in here for churning and avoid
- 7 these debit memo issues that are coming back
- 8 as an indirect charge back to the government
- 9 agencies. That in itself is what is the
- 10 essence of this churning capability here. All
- 11 I want to say.
- MR. ACQUILINO: I think I want to
- 13 emphasize that. We're talking about
- 14 government fares and not commercial ones.
- 15 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: That's
- 16 right. We're only talking about the
- 17 government fares here. Not commercial fares.
- 18 MR. CLIFFORD: Denny Clifford,
- 19 Delta. There's a lesson I say within my
- 20 comment here because we have Y fares for our
- 21 best commercial customers which are still
- 22 subject to receiving debit memos on churning.

- 1 My question to you all is why does the
- 2 Government think it should be exempt from
- 3 those rules when our best customers who are
- 4 under the last seat availability rules are
- 5 subject to this.
- 6 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Are you
- 7 saying that no changes are allowed in the
- 8 record in the churning process?
- 9 MR. CLIFFORD: I'm saying where
- 10 there's a cancellation and then when there's a
- 11 canceled, booked, canceled, booked situation.
- 12 Our best customers also receive it.
- 13 PARTICIPANT: Can you speak up
- 14 please?
- MR. ELLIS: Denny, you need to
- 16 speak up.
- 17 MR. CLIFFORD: I'm saying that
- 18 when there is a multiple of cancellations and
- 19 bookings whether it be the same record, in
- 20 Delta's policy is whether it would be the same
- 21 record or different PNRs that that passenger's
- 22 agency will get billed the debit memo from

- 1 churning.
- 2 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: How many
- 3 times would it be before it triggers a
- 4 churning debit memo? That's what's at issue.
- 5 We don't have a standardized time frame.
- 6 Some carriers do not charge for churning.
- 7 Others understand that the fare rules
- 8 themselves would be no change fees, no
- 9 cancellation penalties, a totally refundable
- 10 type ticket. It's allowed to be changed for
- 11 the people if they wanted to come home a day
- 12 earlier or needed to extend their time. They
- 13 would be able to do so without an indirect
- 14 penalty.
- 15 MR. CLIFFORD: As far as the
- 16 frequency, Jerry, that's proprietary. But let
- 17 me just tell that it happens and there are
- 18 parameters, very specific parameters, many
- 19 parameters under which churning is issued.
- 20 It's not just one set of circumstances.
- 21 There's a lot of different things that it gets
- 22 involved in.

- 1 But the point is that the
- 2 commercial business still follows these rules.
- 3 Why shouldn't the Government?
- 4 MR. BILLONE: Tom Billone, United
- 5 Airlines. I'm looking at this a little
- 6 differently than Denny is looking at it
- 7 because United at this time doesn't issue
- 8 debit memos for churning. However, looking at
- 9 this situation, it appears you don't have
- 10 ticketing time limits. But, yes, you do. You
- 11 have an approval time limit. And in some of
- 12 the systems if you don't have approval within
- 13 48 hours, the record is canceled. So that
- 14 requires your traveler to go in and rebook.
- That's what's generating the
- 16 churning. It is the approval time limit
- 17 that's built into the systems. And so I go 48
- 18 hours and I don't get approval. It drops. I
- 19 go in and rebook and I've got another 48 hours
- 20 and it drops and I rebook. Okay.
- 21 So now you've got some issues
- 22 there and when the airline robotics look at

- 1 this they don't look at it as a YCA or
- 2 anything else. It looks at it as you're
- 3 booking and rebooking in the same PNR and that
- 4 I think is what's driving a lot of the debit
- 5 memo issues. That's my own opinion.
- 6 MR. CLIFFORD: Denny Clifford,
- 7 Delta. I still didn't get a response to my
- 8 question. All I got was a question back. Why
- 9 does the Government think it's exempt from
- 10 something that we apply to our commercial
- 11 friend?
- 12 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Strictly for
- 13 the benefits of the fare that we have not
- 14 changed over this entire time. The benefits
- 15 under the City Pair Program no change fee, no
- 16 cancellation penalty, totally refundable
- 17 ticket. The spirit of that contract is such
- 18 that we have not made that change.
- 19 What's happened here is that the
- 20 carriers now have the technology and the
- 21 ability to be able to track a process like
- 22 churning. We've not changed our behavior.

- 1 The carriers have changed their behavior in
- 2 being able to do this.
- We want to make sure also in
- 4 regards to the approval process. We want to
- 5 make sure we get the inventory back to the
- 6 carriers as swiftly as possible so that you're
- 7 able to resell that seat and not open it.
- 8 That was the initial intent of the approval
- 9 process. Now it turns out we've created
- 10 another issue over here on churning that
- indirectly we're getting a debit memo sent
- 12 back through the TMC when we don't believe
- 13 that we should be getting charged any fee for
- 14 changes whether or not direct or indirect back
- 15 to the TMCs through the carriers.
- 16 MR. CLIFFORD: Denny Clifford. So
- 17 who is supposed to pick up your GDS fees then?
- 18 I mean every time that happens, Jerry, as you
- 19 know the GDS fee is charged the airline.
- 20 Somebody's got to pay for that. You mentioned
- 21 earlier that you're incorporating this into
- 22 the contract to enhance the program.

- 1 What makes the GSA think that this
- 2 is going to somehow stop the elements or the
- 3 instances of churning? In our opinion, this
- 4 is going to exacerbate the entire problem. If
- 5 nobody has a consequence, if nobody has a
- 6 penalty or a down side, to churning and
- 7 violating the booking rules, what's to stop
- 8 them from running roughshod over the entire
- 9 system? They'll run amok.
- 10 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: And that
- 11 point is taken. But we're also looking at the
- 12 fact that not everybody is doing this churning
- 13 however many times you think it is going to
- 14 trigger this debit memo. You haven't told us
- 15 whether or not it's going to be three times a
- 16 PNR a week or twice in one day that's going to
- 17 trigger this. We would not be able to even
- 18 stop this without having some kind of
- 19 inclination from the carriers as to what that
- 20 is.
- 21 (Off the record comment.)
- 22 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: What happens

- 1 if someone needs to make a change to further
- 2 meet their mission requirements.
- 3 MR. CLIFFORD: This isn't talking
- 4 about making changes.
- 5 MR. ELLIS: Guys, please have the
- 6 microphones.
- 7 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: It's making
- 8 changes within the same PNR that's churning.
- 9 MR. BILLONE: You're trying to --
- 10 Tom Billone, United Airlines. What's
- 11 happening is the person is going in and making
- 12 a booking. Within 48 hours that booking is
- 13 not approved. It drops. They go in again and
- 14 rebook it. That's what churning is.
- 15 A change -- What would you change
- 16 in the same itinerary in the same PNR? What
- 17 would you change? You could change a flight.
- 18 That's not churning because you're not
- 19 rebooking the same inventory. Churning is
- 20 rebooking the same flight, the same time, the
- 21 same day and the same PNR. There should be no
- 22 reason for that on a Government fare.

- 1 You could go in if you have a PNR
- 2 and you make a change. I need to change my
- 3 flight tonight. That's not churning. That's
- 4 a free change that you get. There's no fee.
- 5 I mean you're ticketed. You make a change.
- 6 There's no fee. You want to change your
- 7 flight time.
- 8 So churning is the same flight,
- 9 the same day, the same time and the same PNR.
- 10 That's what that is and there should not be
- 11 any of that. There's no reason for it because
- 12 you don't have ticketing time limits. The
- 13 only time limit you have is the 48 hours for
- 14 approval and that's what's generating this.
- Now if you want to put a 48 hour
- 16 ticketing time limit we'll be willing to talk
- 17 to you about that.
- 18 MR. CLIFFORD: Denny Clifford,
- 19 Delta. All valid points, Tom, and we
- 20 underscore what you just said. We'd be
- 21 willing to talk about the ticketing time
- 22 limits as well.

- 1 You know we see instances where
- 2 people are doing churning several times a day.
- 3 They may not even know about it, but they're
- 4 doing it. Which brings me to Klaus' point why
- 5 are not the DTS and ETS systems designed, a
- 6 software change, in order to mitigate this
- 7 problem. You're not going to eliminate it
- 8 totally, but you could sure take a lot of it
- 9 off the table if the software is changed and
- 10 we have yet to understand or even to hear that
- 11 there have been any significant movements in
- 12 that regard.
- 13 Secondly, another point I want to
- 14 make is just education. You know there are
- 15 people out there that have no clue what
- 16 they're doing and the education has not been
- 17 out there. We've been talking about this
- 18 issue for six months, Jerry, every month at
- 19 GSA and all of industry meets about this
- 20 issue. There has been glacial movement on it
- 21 and nothing material with respect to education
- 22 or changing the systems technologically.

- 1 MR. ACQUILINO: Can your robotics
- 2 tell us how many times this is happening? How
- 3 many instances this is happening? Is it
- 4 bigger than a breadbox?
- 5 MR. CLIFFORD: Yes.
- 6 MR. ACQUILINO: Can you provide us
- 7 that information?
- 8 MR. CLIFFORD: Yes.
- 9 MR. ACQUILINO: So we understand
- 10 what the magnitude is for Delta and everyone
- 11 else that has that same issue.
- MR. CLIFFORD: What changes?
- MR. ACQUILINO: Well, we would
- 14 just need to know how many times that happens
- 15 and what's your exposure. You're saying it
- 16 costs you money in the GDS. What's your
- 17 exposure to that unneeded expenditure.
- 18 MR. CLIFFORD: It's bigger than a
- 19 breadbox.
- 20 (Laughter.)
- 21 MR. ACQUILINO: Can you tell us?
- 22 Can you send us what that is?

- 1 MR. CLIFFORD: Yes.
- 2 MR. ACQUILINO: All right. So
- 3 you'll tell us how big that is and what kind
- 4 that is. Thank you.
- 5 MS. CARLOCK: Jerry, I do have a
- 6 question.
- 7 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Go ahead.
- 8 (Off the record comments.)
- 9 MS. CARLOCK: I'm Andrea Carlock
- 10 from Defense Travel Management Office. The
- 11 question that I have is I'm not sure that you
- 12 two [Delta and United Airlines] are on the
- 13 same sheet of music as to what churning is.
- 14 And I think before we can move forward we need
- 15 to make sure that the airlines are going to
- 16 apply churning similar across the board.
- 17 Because I hear you saying one thing and I
- 18 think I'm hearing you say something a little
- 19 bit different.
- 20 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: No. That's
- 21 not the way it's intended.
- MS. CARLOCK: Okay. Am I the only

- 1 one that -- What I heard was that in your
- 2 instance the churning may not necessarily be
- 3 just because of the 48 hour ticket issuance
- 4 time and that it is -- that Delta-Northwest is
- 5 applying churning charges for things other
- 6 than just that and maybe I misunderstood. But
- 7 I think that's important.
- 8 My other thing is with the
- 9 definition I like what you said in regards to
- 10 the specifics. Is there some way we can be
- 11 more specific in our definition? And when we
- 12 use the word "excessive", excessive is
- 13 subjective. What does that really mean? And
- 14 then put a little bit more specifics in there
- 15 so there is no misunderstanding exactly what
- 16 we mean by that churning City Pair fares, what
- 17 they're referring to. Correct?
- 18 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Correct.
- 19 Right. We're only talking about City Pair
- 20 fares here now. This was a generic
- 21 description that we were able to locate. The
- 22 change in the language is up for

- 1 interpretation today. We'll have two weeks to
- 2 make that change to be able to move that
- 3 forward.
- 4 MR. COYLE: George with American
- 5 Airlines. Actually you just answered my
- 6 question. Being specific in the definition
- 7 maybe it would be helpful to say "applicable
- 8 only to government fares." So it would not
- 9 apply to non government fares on a commercial
- 10 basis.
- 11 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: And I
- 12 believe we're going to cover that in the debit
- 13 memos which is going to be the next slide here
- 14 in the definitions. I just want to ask one
- other question, one other area here when Denny
- 16 said we sort of move glacially. I think in
- 17 some areas we've moved expeditiously. There's
- 18 a debit memo council that we've put together
- 19 here since last summer which has allowed us to
- 20 (1) clarify the Fly America Act and to ensure
- 21 that we're not auditing those inappropriately.
- 22 We believe that has minimized some

- 1 of the debit memos or the old notice of
- 2 overcharges that are coming back to the
- 3 carriers that are assisting them. We've seen
- 4 already from some of the carriers they say
- 5 their debit memo process has gone down which
- 6 is a good thing. TMCs, CTOs, travel agencies
- 7 are expressing the same that as everybody
- 8 works together it will help minimize this
- 9 process and this is the extent we're trying to
- 10 do right now is to minimize the debit memos
- 11 for the carriers as well as the TMCs and avoid
- 12 that indirect fee coming back to government
- 13 agencies.
- 14 Next slide please. Slide 7.
- 15 MS. BROWN: Okay. This slide is
- 16 also talking about another definition that was
- 17 added into this year's solicitation. This one
- 18 refers to debit memos and the definition reads
- 19 as "an accounting tool used by all airlines to
- 20 collect amounts or make adjustments to agent
- 21 transactions with respect to the issuance
- 22 and/or use of traffic documents issued by or

- 1 at the request of a travel agency. The
- 2 contract carrier shall not issue debit memos
- 3 on YCA, _CA, or _CB fares to Commercial Travel
- 4 Offices or Travel Management Centers for
- 5 churning. And then compare churning."
- I just want to make a note that
- 7 this definition was slightly modified from the
- 8 version that was sent out to all the carriers
- 9 and that was included in the draft
- 10 solicitation. So it's a slight modification
- 11 to some of the language.
- 12 PARTICIPANT: Can I have the slide
- 13 number please?
- MS. BROWN: Slide seven.
- 15 MR. ELLIS: Slide seven. You need
- 16 to identify yourself.
- 17 MR. BILLONE: It's not in the
- 18 packet.
- 19 MS. BROWN: Okay.
- 20 MR. STAEFE: Klaus Staefe from
- 21 NASA again. That was my point to bring up.
- 22 These debit memos are going directly to the

- 1 TMCs and when asked of a TMC they're upset
- 2 because they're getting bills of several
- 3 thousand dollars for the churning charge, but
- 4 yet they shouldn't come there. And when we
- 5 talk to each provider and I talk to them and
- 6 they say, "Oh, that's business as usual." And
- 7 they will not stand behind this. They'll say,
- 8 "If they want to send it to the TMCs, we're
- 9 not going to get in the middle of it." And
- 10 that's what I'm trying to avoid.
- 11 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Debit memos
- 12 are sent from the carriers to the travel
- 13 agency, not the ETS provider. That's the only
- 14 contact the carriers have for this is through
- 15 the TMCs or the CTOs.
- 16 I guess the other question would
- 17 be if the NASA travelers are in there churning
- 18 the record, rebooking, rebooking, rebooking,
- 19 that ends up issuing a debit memo, is NASA
- 20 then going to pay for the churning of that
- 21 debit memo?
- 22 MR. STAEFE: I'm reading this as a

- 1 contract carrier shall not issue debit memos
- 2 to commercial travel offices or TMCs or in our
- 3 case it's CI Travel.
- 4 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Correct.
- 5 MR. STAEFE: Okay. So the debit
- 6 memos are going directly to CI Travel which
- 7 they shouldn't. Is that correct?
- 8 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Debit memos
- 9 have to go to the travel agency, in your case,
- 10 CI Travel. That's the only communications
- 11 that the carriers have. Their IATA number
- 12 shows on the reservation as to where it's
- 13 coming, not the ETS provider. The ETS
- 14 provider is an online booking engine not the -
- 15 -
- 16 MR. CLIFFORD: Ticket fulfillment.
- 17 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: -- ticket
- 18 fulfillment center. And it's where the ticket
- 19 fulfillment center is being documented from
- 20 the carriers to the travel agency, not your
- 21 ETS provider.
- 22 What we have done with ETS is to

- 1 help ensure that you don't have duplicate
- 2 bookings.
- 3 MR. STAEFE: That's what's
- 4 happened.
- 5 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: We're
- 6 talking about churning here. There is a
- 7 different issue on duplicate bookings.
- 8 MR. STAEFE: Churning. The
- 9 churning part of it.
- 10 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: That's
- 11 correct.
- MR. STAEFE: They're going into
- 13 the system. What the travelers are doing is
- 14 they're going into the system and churning.
- 15 It's like identified by Denny and United
- 16 Airlines. And that creates the debit memos.
- 17 Now TMC, the travel office, is
- 18 sitting there and they're getting these debit
- 19 memos. Why are we not policing the travel
- 20 service provider to avoid letting those go
- 21 through and that's -- I think isn't that part
- 22 of GSA to police?

- 1 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: They might
- 2 have to put a restriction on the ETS system as
- 3 to how many times our government agencies
- 4 could access the system. Right?
- 5 MR. ROBINSON: Yes. Hi. This is
- 6 Frank Robinson and I'm the COTR on the ETS
- 7 services or eGov Travel. One of the things,
- 8 we've had this discussion a lot with our TMC
- 9 forum that we have in conjunction with SGTP.
- 10 But we have a separate TMC forum and at the
- 11 last TMC forum, in fact, it was a NASA
- 12 representative. A young lady, her name
- 13 escapes me, was there. And what was
- 14 identified is the travelers really haven't
- 15 changed their behavior significantly.
- 16 There has always been people who
- 17 have changed their reservations a lot and
- 18 usually the further up you get in an
- 19 organization the more likely their schedules
- 20 are going to change. But, in general, she
- 21 agreed that travelers haven't changed what
- 22 they do. Their schedules change. They need

- 1 to go in and book. They need to rebook. And
- 2 they're not doing anything now that they
- 3 didn't do five years ago or ten years ago.
- 4 The nature of their business requires them to
- 5 change their reservations.
- 6 What has changed is how the
- 7 airlines measure those changes and decide to
- 8 impose fees on those changes. That is what
- 9 has transpired. Okay. So I think I heard you
- 10 correctly in saying where you have travelers
- 11 who are actually abusing the service it's the
- 12 responsibility of the federal agencies to
- 13 actually police their employees because if
- 14 your employee is using a tool to actually
- 15 abuse it.
- But if the employee is using the
- 17 tool, online booking tool, in a manner that
- 18 they -- You know we're talking about sometimes
- 19 as few as two or three changes and wham you're
- 20 booked -- you're whacked within churning.
- 21 Debit memo.
- We're not talking about 20 or 30

- 1 changes. We're talking about less than a
- 2 handful in a lot of cases which result in
- 3 these debit memos to the travel agencies.
- 4 That's not unusual behavior for people who
- 5 travel for the Federal Government especially
- 6 in certain capacities. All right. What it is
- 7 is the airlines are now charging for that
- 8 behavior when they didn't before.
- 9 One last thing, too, this is for
- 10 City Pair fares. The City Pair fares that we
- 11 have says you can cancel, change, amend as
- often as you need to in order to accomplish
- 13 the government's mission. So you know it's
- 14 going to apply and it already applies to the
- 15 City Pair fares. We've already had reached
- 16 this. This is a clarification to what is
- 17 already currently a CPP master contract
- 18 requirement.
- I hope that helped. I have two
- 20 comments from the airlines. Jerry.
- MR. BILLONE: Tom Billone, United
- 22 Airlines again.

- 1 We keep hearing this thing, this
- 2 excuse, that the traveler hasn't changed their
- 3 behavior, that the airlines have changed their
- 4 process, that nothing has changed on the
- 5 government's side. Well, excuse me. You've
- 6 gone to online booking and almost every one of
- 7 these issues is related to online booking.
- 8 Do you want to get into notices of
- 9 overcharge? You keep shaking your head no.
- 10 You've got to understand. You need to make a
- 11 change also. Your travelers are going to need
- 12 to make a change. It's not only the airlines.
- 13 The world has changed. All right. And
- 14 people need to change their behavior.
- And if you keep saying "Well, it's
- 16 the airlines' fault, they've changed, they
- 17 learned how to charge for this and you don't
- 18 do anything on the other end to stop it, we're
- 19 going to have some real problems with this
- 20 program. And I'm telling you as a fact that
- 21 30 years that's really good. But it's still
- 22 acting like it's 30 years ago. You also need

- 1 to change on the government's side.
- 2 MR. CLIFFORD: Denny Clifford at
- 3 Delta. You took the words right out of my
- 4 mouth, Tom. This is exactly what I was going
- 5 to say.
- And, Frank, you made the statement
- 7 that traffic patterns have not changed as if
- 8 that is a good thing. It is not a good thing.
- 9 The reason the airlines built the technology
- 10 to keep track of this stuff is we needed to
- 11 change passenger behavior. And to your point
- 12 where a half a dozen evolutions of data to
- 13 book, cancel, book, cancel that is not normal.
- 14 That's precisely the kind of thing that we're
- 15 trying to prevent here. A half a dozen times.
- 16 That's \$100 to us when you consider all the
- 17 GDS fees. Who is going to pick that up? The
- 18 airlines do.
- 19 And without the opportunity to
- 20 book or at least bill debit memos we have to
- 21 eat that charge. And people have no recourse.
- 22 The traveler has no penalties. The travel

- 1 agency who a lot of times frankly does not
- 2 have control over this has no other option
- 3 other than to pay the debit memo and it wasn't
- 4 even their fault.
- 5 But when somebody does not have
- 6 some downside, some skin in the game, then
- 7 you're going to see this just take off like a
- 8 rocket. Those half a dozen are going to be
- 9 two dozen.
- 10 I just don't understand that.
- 11 It's counterintuitive. I just don't
- 12 understand the logic of trying to impose this
- 13 within the contract and figure out that
- 14 somehow magically maybe the debit memos may go
- 15 away because you've forced it down our throats
- 16 to make it go away with language changes.
- 17 But it's counterintuitive to think
- 18 that the behavior is going to change. It's
- 19 not. It's going to be worse than it was
- 20 before.
- 21 MR. ROBINSON: Thank you very much
- 22 for that. First, I will stand by what we said

- 1 before. There's not an industry standard on
- 2 what constitutes churning. One airline
- 3 charges a debit memo after two reservation
- 4 changes. Another is more tolerant and charges
- 5 a debit memo after six reservation changes.
- 6 Some put it on you and say, "What's this guy
- 7 doing? Can somebody -- Can you reign in this
- 8 traveler because now they've made eight
- 9 changes?" Okay.
- 10 The customer behavior you're
- 11 trying to change, that the airlines claim
- 12 they're trying to change, there's no
- 13 transparency on this practice by the airlines.
- 14 They know what you're charging for baggage.
- 15 They know what you're charging for meals.
- 16 They know what you're charging for seat
- 17 assignments.
- 18 But they don't know and there's no
- 19 transparency there's nothing on your website
- 20 that says, "If you cancel and rebook an
- 21 reservation more than four times we're going
- 22 to charge you \$100." So that's part of the

- 1 problem. You're trying to change traveler
- 2 behavior and you haven't told them what that
- 3 behavior could or should be and when you're
- 4 going to impose the fees. And there's no
- 5 transparency on it at all.
- 6 MS. SINGLETARY: This is Lisa
- 7 Singletary from the U.S. Department of
- 8 Commerce. I've got a question. I'd like to
- 9 find out from the airlines' perspective how do
- 10 you -- I mean hypothetically travelers are
- 11 doing this or the TMCs are doing this because
- 12 I've had this problem with my TMC as well.
- 13 But they're doing it but that's because
- 14 they're trying to preserve the reservation. I
- 15 mean you have a traveler who's booking a
- 16 reservation for maybe two or three weeks in
- 17 advance and they need to first define what the
- 18 airfare is and they need to book the
- 19 reservation. If the reservation cancels after
- 20 48 hours, I mean what are they supposed to do?
- 21 MR. CLIFFORD: This is Denny
- 22 Clifford with Delta. First of all, I think we

- 1 need to explain and I can only speak for Delta
- 2 Airlines. I don't know about the other
- 3 airlines. Delta is not charging for the fact
- 4 that, let's say, seat is unavailable. Our
- 5 system is automatic. And this gets more in
- 6 the duplicate booking side of the house. So
- 7 we don't want to cross over issues here.
- 8 But we're not -- We're trying to
- 9 change the behavior of violating the booking
- 10 process, not for that seat. Now I will admit
- 11 that there's a fee there for the GDS fee that
- 12 needs to be covered. There's a fee there for
- 13 the automation that we spent millions of
- 14 dollars on building to keep track of all this
- 15 stuff. That is what the debit memos are
- 16 reimbursing the airlines for essentially, not
- 17 for that seat. So I just wanted to clear that
- 18 up.
- 19 MS. SINGLETARY: Hello.
- MR. ELLIS: Yes, go ahead.
- 21 MS. SINGLETARY: I mean I still
- 22 don't think my question has been answered.

- 1 MR. ELLIS: Okay. Another airline
- 2 has the mic. They'll try to answer it better
- 3 for you.
- 4 MR. BILLONE: This is Tom Billone,
- 5 United Airlines. You hit the nail on the head
- 6 when you mentioned the 48 hours. I mean that
- 7 is the issue right there. Why is the booking
- 8 not approved within 48 hours?
- 9 MS. SINGLETARY: Well, I mean you
- 10 have processes with an agency. You've got
- 11 processes in which a traveler has to make the
- 12 reservation. They have to obtain travel
- 13 orders. They have to obtain signatures. It
- 14 takes time.
- MR. BILLONE: Well, then maybe you
- 16 ought to change the 48 hours to whatever it's
- 17 going to take. I mean I don't understand why
- 18 there's an arbitrary 48 hours in there if you
- 19 can't meet the 48 hours. You're saying it's
- 20 almost impossible to meet due to the process
- 21 you have to go through. Well, then I think
- 22 maybe somebody ought to talk about changing

- 1 that 48 hour time limit to maybe adding
- 2 another 24 hours to it if that is going to
- 3 help or whatever it's going to take to help
- 4 it.
- 5 That will eliminate all of these
- 6 debit memos for churning because that to me is
- 7 the key issue is the amount of time that is
- 8 required to process it and the 48 hours
- 9 apparently is not enough.
- 10 MS. SINGLETARY: Okay. Who is
- 11 responsible for mandating that it's 48 hours?
- 12 Is that something from GSA?
- MR. ELLIS: No.
- 14 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: No, I
- 15 believe that's going to be internal to each
- 16 agency but not the 48 hours through the ETS
- 17 vendors.
- 18 MS. SINGLETARY: So if that date
- 19 was enlarged that would not be an impact?
- 20 What would be the impact of -- someone says 48
- 21 hours -- 72 hours? What is the impact?
- 22 MR. ELLIS: Jerry Ellis with GSA.

- 1 I think we need to -- If we have some of the
- 2 ETS/DTS vendors here, we need to find out why
- 3 they put that 48 hour auto-cancel and what was
- 4 the thought process of that and can that be
- 5 changed and should it be changed?
- 6 MS. CARLOCK: I can speak to this.
- 7 Ours is not 48 hours. Ours is 24 hours from
- 8 the time, as the traveler, I have to sign it.
- 9 And the reason why we put that in is because
- 10 the airlines complained that we were holding
- 11 their inventory. And so by having it have to
- 12 be signed within a certain period of time
- 13 we're able to give you back your inventory.
- 14 When we didn't have it signed what
- 15 was happening is when we would go in and book
- 16 it it would hold the inventory and we got
- 17 complaints about that. So that's why we put
- 18 the 24 hours for the traveler and then the AO
- 19 has longer to sign it. So that's why we put
- 20 that in.
- In order to have it changed we
- 22 would need to agree then that you want us to

- 1 hold your inventory or do you want us to not
- 2 sign it and give you back your inventory and
- 3 then have the opportunity for us to rebook.
- 4 MR. BILLONE: I want to respond to
- 5 this. This is Tom Billone at United Airlines.
- 6 Every time we come into an issue where it
- 7 said the airlines said this, the airlines said
- 8 that. When you developed the systems you said
- 9 we are in consultation with the airlines.
- 10 Now I can tell you not one airline
- in this room has ever been consulted about
- 12 that. Now there may have been comments made
- in some of these meetings, but no airline has
- 14 been consulted about how to develop these
- 15 systems, what needs to go into the system, the
- 16 rules and regulations that are needed to carry
- 17 through on the systems. So I take exception
- 18 to that.
- 19 Number two, you have -- The main
- 20 issue that we talk about with holding
- 21 inventory is time of departure, when people
- 22 are booking and not ticketing and we're not

- 1 able to get that space back. Okay. So that's
- 2 spoiled inventory. We are tracking that now.
- 3 We're going to track exactly how many
- 4 bookings are made and if that booking is not
- 5 ticketed at the time of 24 hours prior to
- 6 departure, we're going to track that and let
- 7 you know what that issue is because you should
- 8 be ticketing that.
- 9 There are many people that aren't.
- 10 That was our big issue. If it's holding it
- 11 another 24 hours or 36 hours, I don't see that
- 12 it's a problem as long as it's ticketed. If
- it goes back into the inventory that's good.
- 14 But what the issue right now is
- 15 that the travel agencies and TMCs are getting
- 16 debit memos for something that is generated
- 17 because in your system generally speaking,
- 18 ETS, DTS, whatever, the system limitation.
- 19 And if you could figure out how long does it
- 20 really take to process that booking and to get
- 21 an approval and give it a few extra hours then
- 22 I think you'll be fine. We'll be out. This

- 1 issue would be a moot point.
- 2 But we can't sit here and just
- 3 argue back and forth it's your fault. That's
- 4 the key is how long is it taking to process
- 5 the booking and if 24 hours isn't enough
- 6 because obviously it isn't because we're
- 7 hearing that then somebody has to look at how
- 8 to change it and fix it so we're not getting
- 9 every meeting having this come up.
- 10 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: Let me get
- 11 this straight. What you just said that we
- 12 could continue to move forward with this
- definition if we made changes on the ETS/DTS
- 14 side if that's what's causing this. Is that
- 15 correct?
- 16 MR. BILLONE: If the time limit in
- 17 the system --
- 18 PARTICIPANT: Can you speak up
- 19 please?
- MR. ELLIS: We're getting him the
- 21 microphone. Thank you.
- 22 MR. BILLONE: Give me the one

- 1 microphone they got from the stimulus package.
- 2 Go to Target again and get a Mr. Microphone.
- Anyway, what I'm saying is let's
- 4 look at how long it's taking to process a
- 5 booking. Okay. Somebody has to know what the
- 6 outside parameters are on that. You know is
- 7 it like for us? We thought it was 48 hours.
- 8 Twenty-four hours to get something done I mean
- 9 I could tell you from talking to family
- 10 members who work for the government that's
- 11 almost an impossibility.
- MS. CARLOCK: You have two pieces
- 13 there. Twenty-four for me to sign it.
- MR. ELLIS: Wait a minute. If you
- 15 don't have the microphone you don't talk.
- 16 MR. BILLONE: Okay. So I need to
- 17 get approval. So I'm doing a booking. Okay.
- 18 And I have to sign it saying it's approved or
- 19 do you have to send it somebody to get it
- 20 approved and what's that 24 hours? Is it for
- 21 me to finish my booking or for you to say
- 22 "Yeah, you can go"?

- 1 MS. CARLOCK: DTS has two time
- 2 limits. I, as the traveler, once I make my
- 3 authorization, I have 24 hours from that
- 4 period of time for me to sign it. If it is
- 5 not signed within that 24 hour period, I will
- 6 get something that tells me "If you don't sign
- 7 it this reservation will be canceled."
- 8 There is another time limit for
- 9 the AO, the approving official, to sign it.
- 10 If that AO does not sign it, then there is an
- 11 action that takes place. So there are two
- 12 separate actions from a system standpoint
- 13 based on our policy.
- However, that's not to say we're
- 15 not open for discussion to make adjustments to
- 16 that. But that's what's in place right now.
- 17 MR. BILLONE: Well, I think the
- 18 times need to be adjusted. That's my own
- 19 opinion. I think everybody else would agree
- 20 if it's going to alleviate this contentious
- 21 issue of debit memos and churning. We need to
- 22 look at maybe stretching the time on that.

- 1 You know 24 hours for government
- 2 travel a lot of people are quite busy. They
- 3 don't get a chance to get back in there. Who
- 4 knows? They may even be traveling in the
- 5 interim and they can't get to it. So I mean
- 6 let's look at changing and adjusting the times
- 7 and I think that will go a long way to solving
- 8 this issue.
- 9 MR. CLIFFORD: Denny Clifford,
- 10 Delta. I would agree with that. There are
- 11 two issues here. One is we don't want our
- 12 seats to be out there hanging. But that's in
- 13 some sense a separate situation, a separate
- 14 issue, that we need to guard against.
- But I'm not so sure that expanding
- 16 the time frames to, let's say, 72 hours or
- 17 whatever it may be through the system would
- 18 cause a major problem. I mean those people
- 19 are probably going to hold those seats open
- 20 anyway for awhile.
- 21 So I guess I would look at
- 22 expanding the time frame. At least get rid of

- 1 the booking problem part of this thing at the
- 2 onset. You know, the 24 hours is pretty much
- 3 inside that's causing a lot of problems.
- 4 FACILITATOR BRISTOW: That being
- 5 said can we continue to move forward with
- 6 these definitions?
- 7 (Continuing conference call
- 8 issues.)
- 9 MR. COYLE: It's George Coyle,
- 10 American Airlines. I would weigh in favor of
- 11 a closer study of the time limits. I think
- 12 that would benefit all the carriers to stop
- 13 any potential churning and with an adjustment
- 14 there if we can.
- 15 MR. BRISTOW: We can move on with
- 16 the definitions. And move along with a closer
- 17 study on adjusting the time limits.
- 18 MR. COYLE: Correct. And one
- 19 other statement. As a general observation,
- 20 I'm really not thrilled about putting language
- in the agreement that relates to debit memos.
- 22 But as long as it is targeted just to

- 1 churning, I think we're okay.
- 2 MR. BRISTOW: That was the intent.
- 3 To target just the churning just on
- 4 government rates.
- 5 MR. BILLONE: Tom Billone, United
- 6 Airlines. I would go along with this as long
- 7 as we get a commitment from GSA and ETS and
- 8 DTS that progress would be made in changing
- 9 the time limits, which will eliminate this
- 10 whole issue. And we have other issues with
- 11 the booking systems that need to be fixed
- 12 also, which relate to the people in the back
- 13 tier office.
- 14 So we'd like to see a whole rework
- of ETS and DTS because they are the crux of
- 16 all of the notices of overcharge, or 90
- 17 percent of them, and the debit memos that are
- 18 being issued because people are booking
- 19 online, not knowing what they're doing,
- 20 causing problems.
- 21 And my wife brought home her
- 22 travel manual on how to do -- she's with

- 1 Geological Survey -- and I think it was like
- 2 197 pages long. I mean so somebody is not
- 3 going to -- a new employee is not going to
- 4 read a 197-page thing. And the print is about
- 5 this big. You can't see them.
- 6 So you've got issues. But I mean
- 7 some of the things are directly related to the
- 8 self booking tools that we need to, as an
- 9 industry, sit down and say how do we fix this?
- 10 These are the issues that we see, okay, and
- 11 everything that I'm pointing out about of
- 12 notices of overcharge, which we send out as
- 13 debit memos to the TMC, is related to how
- 14 somebody booked something, okay?
- 15 And it's not the TMC's fault.
- 16 It's not the airlines' fault. It's the
- 17 traveler and the way the system presents the
- 18 options to them. So that's another thing we
- 19 would like to carry forward.
- 20 MR. CLIFFORD: Denny Clifford,
- 21 Delta. We'll agree to looking at the
- 22 expansion of the time frame but on two

- 1 conditions, and this is not just the airlines
- 2 rolling over and just offering things up.
- 3 It's got to be -- call it quid pro quo, call
- 4 it cooperation, call it whatever. But it's
- 5 got to be both ways.
- 6 We need a commitment by ETS and
- 7 DTS to mitigate the current problems. This is
- 8 irrespective of the timing issues that we're
- 9 talking about. We want a commitment by ETS
- 10 and DTS to make some fundamental changes to
- 11 the software to help resolve the issue. We
- 12 have not heard anything today, and I haven't
- 13 heard anything in the last six months, that is
- 14 suggesting that they are going to do that.
- 15 Secondly, we want a commitment by
- 16 the GSA and a concrete plan and proposal by
- 17 the GSA to get education out there to train
- 18 people, not fluff, not just saying oh, we're
- 19 going to train people. We want some concrete
- 20 evidence that that's going to happen out
- 21 there.
- That's the only way we're going to

- 1 fundamentally resolve this problem through all
- 2 those mechanisms. But you can't just have
- 3 one, expanding the time frames. We're not in
- 4 agreement with that if we don't have input
- 5 from the GSA about the education and DTS/ETS
- 6 about making software changes.
- 7 MR. BRISTOW: Thank you very much.
- 8 I believe we can get the particular people
- 9 together to continue that discussion along the
- 10 way in all of those areas, whether or not it
- 11 is training, ETS, or the City Pair Program,
- 12 our TSS contracts, or travel agency contracts,
- 13 we're open to that. Our doors have been open.
- We've been working the debit memo
- 15 issue for a while. We'd like to close that
- 16 down. And it doesn't seem like we're getting
- 17 to a point where we can close that down at
- 18 this point but we'll continue to leave the
- 19 doors open for discussion.
- Next slide please.
- 21 MR. ELLIS: Okay. Good afternoon,
- 22 ladies and gentlemen. I'm going to talk about

- 1 the next slide -- oh, I have to do it. Okay,
- 2 so we're going to talk about the connect time.
- 3 The not to exceed connect time for
- 4 the FY11 contract has been increased from 90
- 5 minutes to 100 minutes for domestic markets.
- 6 And there was a question that said "why did
- 7 this change. There's been 90 minutes for
- 8 years and years and years". Well, you're
- 9 right. It has.
- 10 But industry dynamics have
- 11 changed. And mostly this change was made from
- 12 customer questions and comments asking why
- 13 certain markets which were desirable were not
- 14 awarded. And we went in and we saw that they
- 15 were solicited but we got no offers.
- 16 And so when that happens, we go
- 17 and say well, why did we not get offers. And
- 18 this happened mostly in trans-con markets to
- 19 smaller areas. And I'm going to say Los
- 20 Angels and San Diego to Jacksonville, North
- 21 Carolina, Albuquerque and San Francisco to
- 22 Huntsville, Albuquerque to Dayton, and the

- 1 Washington airports to Monterey, California,
- 2 markets like those that are trans-con.
- And we had two flights going from
- 4 east to west but we only had one flight
- 5 connection making the normal connections
- 6 because of the time changes going from west to
- 7 east. So we have one of two things we can do.
- 8 We can either drop the minimum flight numbers
- 9 from two down to one or, in this case, it was
- 10 decided by the team that we extend the
- 11 connection market because normally we found
- 12 that there was a second flight that was
- 13 offered from west to east but it had like 92
- 14 up to 98 minute connection time. And so it
- 15 eliminated that second flight from qualifying.
- 16 So that is why we made the change.
- 17 And this came from our customers. It did not
- 18 come from the industry. It came from the
- 19 customers, most notably DoD and NASA. Maybe
- 20 that was because they were missing some
- 21 important markets in their inventory. So it
- 22 allows better or any response and that's why

- 1 this change was made.
- 2 Please note that even though Guam
- 3 is a U.S. protectorate, it is considered an
- 4 international market for this contract and it
- 5 has been for many, many years. And in
- 6 international markets, the maximum connect
- 7 time still is 180 minutes unless that market
- 8 is in the extended connection market where it
- 9 will be a double connection with up to 300
- 10 total minutes connect time.
- 11 Do we have any questions on this
- 12 change?
- MR. ROBINSON: Folks, we need to
- 14 do a quick system update here because there
- 15 are 15 people on the phone who need to dial
- 16 back in with their password so that they can
- 17 hear what's going on. So we disconnected
- 18 everybody and they're dialing back in.
- 19 MR. STAEFE: Klaus Staefe with
- 20 NASA.
- 21 MR. ELLIS: Time out, time out.
- 22 Hi everybody. We're back online.

- 1 We're sorry about that. Hopefully everybody
- 2 is still here.
- 3 Once again, let me remind you of
- 4 the ground rules. Please put your system on
- 5 mute unless you plan to make a comment to the
- 6 room and get on our transcript. We apologize
- 7 and we're going to start the meeting again.
- 8 Thank you.
- 9 MR. STAEFE: Klaus Staefe with
- 10 NASA. Those are for international carriers.
- 11 Do you have a minimum connection time on
- 12 international flights? Or is there a minimum
- 13 time? In other words, like if we have a
- 14 flight that goes to Moscow and you have 35
- minutes from one gate to another, we don't
- 16 believe that's enough time.
- 17 MR. BILLONE: We're working on
- 18 that problem. Thank you.
- 19 PARTICIPANT: That was Tom Billone
- 20 with United Airline.
- 21 MR. CLIFFORD: Denny Clifford.
- 22 Just to answer your question, a lot of that's

- 1 airport dependent, Klaus, and it's defined,
- 2 you know, but we try to make the legal
- 3 connections in the minimum. Sometimes it's
- 4 not long enough for a lot of people, depending
- 5 on the circumstances of the airport.
- 6 My other comment on this is, you
- 7 know, Delta disapproves with this change,
- 8 mainly in concept. I know ten minutes doesn't
- 9 sound like a lot. But let's face it, you've
- 10 got 5,000 markets. And what are you looking
- 11 at? Maybe a half a dozen here that made it on
- 12 the radar screen because of this deal?
- 13 MR. ELLIS: Twenty to 25.
- MR. CLIFFORD: All right, 20 to
- 15 25. At what point then, Jerry, do you stop
- 16 parceling out this contract? Let's say next
- 17 year you've got some markets that come in at
- 18 102 minutes. Do you then add another ten
- 19 markets -- another 105 minutes the next year.
- 20 At what point do you start
- 21 splitting hairs on all these markets? I mean
- 22 90 minutes was fine. The dynamics of the

- 1 industry have not changed that dramatically in
- 2 terms of connect times.
- MR. ELLIS: Oh, Denny, they have.
- 4 The number of markets that we lost last year
- 5 and the year before that because of service
- 6 cutbacks, we had to reaward over 400 markets
- 7 the year before last because of the industry
- 8 dynamics of service changes.
- 9 MR. CLIFFORD: Where do you stop
- 10 the slippery slope?
- 11 MR. ELLIS: Well, Denny, as you
- 12 say, the 90 minutes had been in there for
- 13 years and years and years and years. I mean I
- 14 think this is a very insignificant change to
- 15 accommodate our customers. And let's face it,
- 16 GSA's direction is that we are trying to
- 17 provide government travel at the most cost
- 18 effective measures to accommodate the
- 19 government's travel mission.
- 20 That's our -- and so when we get
- 21 customer comments saying look, we need this
- 22 market, we have to -- we feel it is incumbent

- 1 upon us that we have the fiduciary
- 2 responsibility to try to accommodate our
- 3 customers' needs.
- 4 MR. CLIFFORD: And we have a
- 5 fiduciary responsibility to ours as well.
- 6 MR. ELLIS: But what does this do
- 7 to change your or any airlines' dynamics?
- 8 MR. CLIFFORD: I'm just saying
- 9 that you are taking a small component of the
- 10 whole process and making changes based on a
- 11 fairly minute sample of markets here. And
- 12 that you get into a slippery slope that where
- do you stop this down the road on any issue?
- 14 Not just connect time.
- You take a very small microcosm of
- 16 the entire picture and you say okay, we're
- 17 going to make a change. That's the concept
- 18 that we disagree with.
- MR. ACQUILINO: Okay, Denny, we
- 20 hear you. But the thing is that we are not
- 21 going to solicit for any more particular
- 22 markets than we've always done. So there's

- 1 not a wholesale increase based on this change
- 2 to the numbers of markets we're going out to
- 3 solicit.
- 4 So there is a net zero impact with
- 5 this ten-minute change. So it's not the
- 6 slippery slope I think I'm hearing you say
- 7 about, you know, opening it up to more and
- 8 more markets to this contract. It's the same
- 9 amount of markets that we're soliciting.
- 10 And Jerry is going to talk about
- 11 markets and how we've chosen them and the
- 12 numbers, et cetera. So that may help you
- 13 understand that this is not a wholesale
- 14 opening of all the possible city pairs to this
- 15 program.
- 16 MR. CLIFFORD: No, it doesn't help
- 17 me understand because my point was not about
- 18 expanding the number of markets. My point was
- 19 about parceling out things so that you
- 20 incrementally add little pieces to the
- 21 contract because of small pieces that you are
- 22 dealing with. That was my point.

- 1 It was not about expanding the
- 2 markets. You've gone less, I think, this year
- 3 than last year. So that was not my point.
- 4 MR. ACQUILINO: Okay. So you're
- 5 saying incrementally changing the contract --
- 6 MR. CLIFFORD: This thing has been
- 7 in place for 15 or 20 years, 90 minutes. All
- 8 of a sudden now --
- 9 PARTICIPANT: Can you please speak
- 10 up?
- 11 MR. CLIFFORD: -- you got --
- MR. COYLE: Denny, you need the
- 13 microphone.
- 14 MR. CLIFFORD: Now you've got --
- 15 all of a sudden you've got 20 markets that
- 16 don't hit the 90 minutes. And now you're
- 17 going to start adding those in. Okay. What
- 18 other components in the contract are you going
- 19 to be hitting up that you've got some other
- 20 issue? Maybe it's not even connect times.
- 21 Maybe it will be.
- 22 But at what point do you start

- 1 parceling out all these different things that
- 2 you run into on this contract and you just
- 3 start layering in more and more issues that
- 4 are relatively small? But over time, they add
- 5 up.
- 6 MR. BRISTOW: The intent of the
- 7 100 minutes was also to allow you -- and we
- 8 looked at a number of different markets. It
- 9 wasn't just the 20. It was the connection
- 10 aspect in your larger markets. We're seeing a
- 11 significant reduction in the amount of flights
- in specific connecting markets, which then
- 13 tell us it going to be more time to make that
- 14 connection to get to the next flight.
- 15 We still allow the carriers that
- 16 are under 90 minutes to continue to provide us
- 17 connecting times under 90 minutes. That's not
- 18 the issue. We're just allowing it so that we
- 19 don't run into an issue by not awarding to the
- 20 carrier with the best fare and the best
- 21 service because we missed it by one or two
- 22 minutes.

- 1 MR. ELLIS: Again, Denny, just to
- 2 reiterate. We're not adding markets. We're
- 3 just making markets that were not awarded this
- 4 past year that have been awarded in the past.
- 5 And we need to find out why wasn't it
- 6 awarded. And it is an important market to our
- 7 customer. And we need to find a way to try to
- 8 accommodate that.
- 9 I mean we've heard from Delta.
- 10 Are there any other carriers that have a like
- 11 problem with this?
- 12 (No response.)
- 13 MR. ELLIS: Okay. Next slide.
- 14 Just wanted to talk about the
- 15 activity reporting, the dual level activity
- 16 reporting. For contracts that have both a YCA
- 17 and capacity controlled, again, you are
- 18 required to provide us with a monthly report
- 19 on the percentage of passengers -- not revenue
- 20 but percentage of passengers that flew in that
- 21 market on a YCA fare or a capacity controlled
- 22 fare.

- One thing that I want to make sure
- 2 you understand is that you only put in this
- 3 report those markets where you have a dual
- 4 fare. If you've only filed a single normal
- 5 fair, i.e., a YCA fare, please do not include
- 6 that because the YCA would automatically be
- 7 100 percent. And it throws off our data. So
- 8 only include those markets which have both the
- 9 YCA and _CA.
- Just, for instance, in FY09, we
- 11 tracked a 55 percent capacity controlled usage
- 12 on domestic markets, which was a six
- 13 percentage points increase over FY08. And for
- 14 international markets, 52 percent capacity
- 15 controlled fares, which was a booming 15
- 16 percent over FY08. So we, at GSA, feel that
- 17 this is a win-win situation in that we are
- 18 getting our customers some lower fares on the
- 19 capacity controlled fares and yet it allows
- 20 you to control your inventory.
- 21 So that's why we feel that since
- 22 the initiation of the dual fares, that each

- 1 year it has gotten better and better, that
- 2 you're able to control your capacity and
- 3 hopefully we're able to get some lower fares.
- 4 Are there any questions on the
- 5 activity report?
- 6 (No response.)
- 7 MR. ELLIS: I do ask that you be
- 8 timely with these because I get pressure from
- 9 my superiors wanting to see that report on a
- 10 quarterly basis and certainly on a year-end
- 11 basis. So thank you very much. Most airlines
- 12 have been very, very good about supplying me
- 13 with this information.
- 14 Okay, let's talk about how we
- 15 select markets. The question came up "well
- 16 how do you select markets". The markets
- 17 selected for the FY11 solicitations, again,
- 18 were based on market requests from our
- 19 customers and the government agencies.
- 20 Just to let you know, we normally
- 21 get in the neighborhood of any place from
- 22 20,000 to 35,000 market requests a year. And

- 1 so our first job is to pare these down to a
- 2 manageable level. And we try to keep it no
- 3 more than 7,000 markets that we solicit in any
- 4 given year. So that's our first requirement,
- 5 to find out whether -- how many passengers per
- 6 year. And, of course we eliminate those that
- 7 don't have high usage.
- 8 Also we take historical volume
- 9 compiled from SmartPay and ARC. And we brush
- 10 all those up together and we come up with the
- 11 markets we're going to solicit for any given
- 12 year.
- So for FY11, we have a total of
- 14 6,689 markets, which is fewer than we did last
- 15 year by about 200 markets. The Group 1
- 16 markets, we have 4,059. Domestic markets are
- 17 2,810, international, 836. The extended
- 18 connection markets, domestic, 75, and most of
- 19 the domestic markets, again, are those in and
- 20 out of Hawaii or Alaska where a double
- 21 connection or a longer connection time is
- 22 required.

- 1 And in those markets, especially
- 2 in Alaska, Hawaii, you will notice that
- 3 instead of have a two-flight minimum, we have
- 4 a one-flight minimum, certainly in Alaska
- 5 because of the seasonality during the winter
- 6 months.
- 7 The Group 1 extended connection
- 8 international is 338 this year, which is an
- 9 increase. Year over year, we find more and
- 10 more markets into the Middle East, points
- 11 beyond western Europe into the eastern Europe
- 12 in those former Warsaw Pact countries, and
- 13 certainly into central and eastern Africa
- 14 markets where you need the double connection
- 15 and longer connection times.
- So Group 2 markets, you can see we
- 17 have 2,630 markets. Group 2 domestic, 1,975,
- 18 and the international is 655.
- 19 Do you have any questions on that?
- 20 (No response.)
- 21 MR. ELLIS: We're kind of pleased
- 22 with the way that the extended connection

- 1 markets have gone. This has been one of those
- 2 changes we did about three years ago. And it
- 3 seems to be embraced by both the industry, and
- 4 that certainly is a help to our customers who
- 5 are going to some of these far away places in
- 6 order to get a contract fare.
- 7 There are a couple of questions
- 8 that came up from one of our agencies. They
- 9 asked "will the next fiscal year city pairs
- 10 include foreign carriers under bilateral and
- 11 multilateral agreements, i.e., European Union
- 12 carriers, Australian carriers, et cetera".
- 13 The answer is their opportunity is
- 14 only through a code share with the U.S. flag
- 15 carriers. We do not contract with foreign
- 16 flag carriers at all except through, again,
- 17 the code share arrangements with the U.S. flag
- 18 carriers.
- 19 Second question was "will the next
- 20 fiscal year's city pairs include penalty fares
- 21 with standard terms and conditions in addition
- 22 to the current two-tier fully refundable

- 1 fares?" And the answer to that is no. We're
- 2 going to stick with the normal YCA and
- 3 capacity controlled contract fares that are
- 4 unrestricted.
- 5 Okay, I'll turn it back over to
- 6 Jerry who will talk about other things if
- 7 there are no questions about markets. Thank
- 8 you.
- 9 MR. BRISTOW: Thanks, Jerry.
- 10 Just wanted to bring you up to
- 11 date a little bit about what we've been doing
- 12 with the City Pair Program, how we get the
- 13 information out, talk about some training
- 14 aspect but we also want to show you some of
- 15 the good things we have out here on the site
- 16 to assist our government travelers, give them
- 17 access into the visibility of the City Pair
- 18 Program. And this is through the City Pair
- 19 Program website.
- You'll see two things out here.
- 21 One is your airfare search on an individual
- 22 basis that you can put in your market, say

- 1 from Washington to LA, and it will populate
- 2 that one market for you. Or you can go in and
- 3 do the downloadable Excel file transfer that
- 4 gives you all the 5,000 markets that we have
- 5 awarded. If you are so inclined to want that
- 6 file, you'll have access to that. And it
- 7 comes out in an Excel file format.
- 8 We have a new fare calculator out
- 9 there, which will assist you in getting the
- 10 total, or close to the total should cost
- 11 estimate of your trip. Last year we had
- 12 issues such as fuel surcharges and people
- 13 didn't know what the current fuel surcharge
- 14 was going to be at that time. Or what the
- 15 baggage fee was going to be on that carrier.
- 16 So we've enhanced this calculator
- 17 to show the one way or the round-trip fare.
- 18 I'm going to show you that in a little bit.
- 19 But it also gives you the capability to see
- 20 what the baggage fee was going to be if you
- 21 are going to check one or two bags and also
- 22 what the current fuel surcharge is in that

- 1 specific market.
- We also have a frequently asked
- 3 questions site out there. They are put in
- 4 there as a question with some answers for
- 5 response. Really good information out there
- 6 for our government travelers. For our
- 7 government agencies that want to do some in-
- 8 house training as well, there is some good
- 9 information on the city pair program.
- 10 Our fact sheets show exactly what
- 11 we do and what's allowed, like for baggage.
- 12 It would show in there that the FTR does allow
- 13 for payment on baggage so they are being
- 14 reimbursed appropriately along with those
- 15 flights.
- 16 And then links to other travel
- 17 programs like the ETS, like FedRooms, also
- 18 DTMO, car rental rates through that process as
- 19 well. So a wealth of information, hopefully
- 20 some things that you will be able to utilize
- 21 and see.
- 22 And, of course, there are direct

- 1 links out to the Federal Travel Regulations so
- 2 that people know exactly how they can travel
- 3 and what they should be doing.
- 4 This is a quick look at our site.
- 5 As you come out to the Airfare City Pair
- 6 Program, of course on the left-side there on
- 7 the menus, there is our FAQs, with frequently
- 8 asked questions, fact sheets, Airfare City
- 9 Pair service, ask the expert, these are
- 10 questions and some answers that we have out
- 11 there for our travelers, current awarded
- 12 markets, and approved tribal users,
- 13 partnership meeting minutes, like this, these
- 14 will be posted out there, pre-solicitation
- 15 meetings also out there, solicitations, the
- 16 travel links, and the historical library.
- 17 The historical library actually
- 18 goes all the back to -- ten years -- so that
- 19 you're able to see those types of airfares
- 20 that we had back then. And you'll see some
- 21 good value there.
- 22 But for this instance here, we're

- 1 going to look at the Airfare City Pair search.
- 2 So you just click on there. It takes you out
- 3 to that site. And you'll notice it over here
- 4 with the Airfare City Pair fares.
- 5 And we have a little disclaimer in
- 6 here because we wanted to ensure that you
- 7 understood that these airfares do not include
- 8 fuel surcharge or baggage fees. So the
- 9 disclaimer helps you along the way to
- 10 ascertain what that true cost estimate should
- 11 be.
- 12 Then we type in the DCA/LAX. It
- 13 defaults to the search FY10. And this is one
- 14 of the new things we put in there this year.
- 15 Not just the one airport but all the airports
- 16 that serve multiple cities. For Washington,
- 17 D.C., you'll see all three of the Washington
- 18 airports and for LA, you'll see all five of
- 19 the airports out of the LA area. It allows
- 20 you to find out where you are going and what
- 21 your airfare is.
- It shows the awarded carrier, the

- 1 service, whether or not it is connection-type
- 2 service or it's non-stop, the YCA, the _CA,
- 3 the _CB, that's a business class fare for
- 4 international travel. So if you're traveling
- 5 international, you'd be able to see that as
- 6 well.
- 7 And then the effective date, the
- 8 reason we did the effective dates in here --
- 9 the expiration dates because if we do a re-
- 10 award, you'll actually see the new dates that
- 11 it was re-awarded and when that took place.
- 12 So throughout the year now,
- 13 because we had so many the other year, we
- 14 found it necessary to ensure that you knew
- 15 when that new contract was awarded or re-
- 16 awarded to a different carrier.
- 17 MR. ELLIS: Jerry?
- MR. BRISTOW: Sure.
- 19 MR. ELLIS: Can you go back to the
- 20 previous slide? I want to -- Jerry is going
- 21 to go back to the previous slide. And I want
- 22 to show those agencies out here a little

- 1 shortcut that might help you.
- If you put in your city, and let's
- 3 just say for instance you are in Dayton, Ohio,
- 4 and you put D-A-Y in the departure city and do
- 5 not put a destination and then click on the
- 6 FY10, your response would be every contract
- 7 market in and out of Dayton with the same
- 8 information: the carrier, the prices, and
- 9 everything like.
- 10 So if you're doing cost
- 11 comparisons like if you want to find out where
- 12 will be a good conference place, Orlando or
- 13 San Diego or Phoenix or whatever, or you just
- 14 want to see what all the market fares are --
- 15 contract market fares out of the given city or
- 16 airport, that's the fastest way rather than
- 17 doing it city by city by city.
- 18 MR. BRISTOW: Thank you. Just a
- 19 little more enhancement to the product here.
- 20 This will take -- when you click
- 21 on the fare, this will take you right into the
- 22 calculator. And, of course, it says one way

- 1 or round trip. You have the option just to
- 2 click on -- and it would automatically
- 3 calculate that fare for you, one way or round
- 4 trip.
- 5 First baggage fee comes up. You
- 6 click on there if you are going to check a bag
- 7 but if you are not going to check a bag, that
- 8 will zero out. One bag is 20 dollars, second
- 9 bag, in this instance, is 30. And, of course,
- 10 we said it was round -- one way, so -- oh, I'm
- 11 sorry, they had two additional flights. There
- 12 you go. So 60 dollars, so total should cost
- 13 estimate 450 dollars, not including your
- 14 taxes.
- 15 So it gets you close without
- 16 having to get in and utilize live data to be
- 17 able to find out this information. So
- 18 helpfully this going is to help our travelers
- 19 and our carriers with the correct information.
- 20 And we update this as these changes occur.
- 21 We've actually built a table in
- 22 here for our fuel surcharges that will read

- 1 that automatically and calculate that into the
- 2 process there for you.
- 3 As you can see, this year on the
- 4 domestic markets, we haven't had much activity
- 5 on fuel charges. Fuel seems to have
- 6 stabilized this year. And domestically we've
- 7 seen those basically disappear.
- 8 Internationally, carriers cannot control their
- 9 fuel purchases on the international markets.
- 10 And you'll see some fuel surcharges on the
- 11 international markets.
- 12 New points of contact out here.
- 13 This is everybody that works on the City Pair
- 14 team. Bianca Norman is our Director and her
- 15 phone number, Kristen Jaremback, our
- 16 Contracting Officer, Kwanita Brown, our
- 17 Contract Specialist, Jerry Ellis, our Business
- 18 Management Specialist, and all of our
- 19 contacts, myself, Jerry Bristow, Program
- 20 Manager, and Vince Acquilino.
- 21 Please feel free to contact any of
- 22 us at any time for any question that you may

- 1 have on the City Pair contract or to answer
- 2 these other types of questions as they relate
- 3 to travel and the City Pair Program.
- 4 MS. DANZLER: Yes, I have a
- 5 question. This is Debbie Danzler with EPA. I
- 6 may have missed it if you mentioned it earlier
- 7 with the phone issue but will the City Pair
- 8 website at any time start showing carbon
- 9 footprint mileage?
- 10 MR. BRISTOW: We don't have that
- 11 at the moment though these are things that
- 12 we're working on -- looking at for the City
- 13 Pair Program. Under the GSA Travel Management
- 14 Information Services, we're able to produce a
- 15 carbon footprint of your Agency's travel.
- We're working with the Department
- of Energy to be able to provide you with this
- 18 reporting mechanism. And once this guidance
- 19 is issued from the Department of Energy -- and
- 20 I believe it's going to be in April -- we'll
- 21 be able to move that out.
- There are a couple of areas that

- 1 we want to make sure we address. And, yes,
- 2 City Pair is on the agenda for greenhouse gas
- 3 emission-type reporting.
- 4 That is one of the things we are
- 5 going to talk about in the questions that are
- 6 coming up, new emerging issues with the
- 7 government, new emerging issues around the
- 8 world. And we want to make sure we cover
- 9 those. So thanks for your question.
- 10 Slide 21 here, we also have
- 11 contracting issues, it's onthego@gsa.gov.
- 12 Just program issues, we have a new site here,
- 13 travel.programs@gsa.gov.
- 14 This will help differentiate the
- issues, help us be able to respond a little
- 16 bit quicker to you. We look at this and
- 17 usually respond within 24 hours. If it
- 18 requires additional information and it may
- 19 take us a little bit longer, we'll advise you
- 20 of that. Thanks for the email but we're
- 21 moving this forward to the subject matter
- 22 experts that can answer that question for you

- 1 specifically.
- Now we come to the questions for
- 3 the new issues. Anything that anybody would
- 4 like to discuss or talk about? Things that
- 5 are coming down the pike.
- 6 Tom?
- 7 MR. BILLONE: Tom Billone, United
- 8 Airlines. I would like to announce that we've
- 9 changed somewhat our bag policy for active
- 10 duty military. The military member no longer
- 11 needs to show orders. They need to be
- 12 traveling on orders but they no longer need to
- 13 show orders.
- 14 It was causing a problem when the
- 15 military member didn't have orders with them
- 16 and we had even our own people were getting
- into arguments out in San Diego over this
- 18 issue. So we worked hard to get that taken
- 19 care of. So that should already be in the
- 20 profile.
- 21 We want to remind everybody this
- 22 is for U.S. military -- active duty military

- 1 only, not foreign military. So just to let
- 2 you know because we've had issues with foreign
- 3 military stating that they're supposed to get
- 4 the exemption. And we're not giving the
- 5 exemption to foreign military.
- 6 MR. BRISTOW: Thank you.
- 7 MR. BILLONE: On the -- real quick
- 8 here, Jerry -- on the calculator down at the
- 9 bottom, we have put in those exceptions as
- 10 they apply to the carrier. So if you can give
- 11 us that exception update, that's what is going
- 12 to show in the calculator down here below and
- 13 the effective date on that.
- Okay, so whatever your exception
- is, we take it right off your site, implant
- 16 that into the calculator so that people know
- 17 who is exempted from the baggage charge. And
- 18 thanks for that.
- 19 MR. ELLIS: Thank you for that,
- 20 Tom.
- Just a quick question on that.
- 22 DoD family members, when traveling on PCS

- 1 [Permanent Change of Station] orders, does
- 2 that also include family members on an
- 3 accompanied tour?
- 4 MR. BILLONE: Yes.
- 5 MR. BRISTOW: Thank you very much.
- 6 MR. BILLONE: And on leave in
- 7 conjunction with.
- 8 MR. BRISTOW: And on leave in
- 9 conjunction with.
- 10 MR. BILLONE: Right. Because they
- 11 are entitled from point A to point B. Just
- 12 because they want to go home, we shouldn't
- 13 penalize them for that. So --
- 14 MR. BRISTOW: Again, that
- 15 exception is going to show out here on the
- 16 calculator if you get us that right
- 17 information, okay, the verbiage.
- I have a couple of other notes
- 19 here, carbon footprint offset fees for EU and
- 20 OpenSkies, I believe that is an issue for the
- 21 carriers, one that we're looking at and how
- 22 that is going to play out into the EU markets.

- 1 Again, we believe that it should be outside
- 2 of the fare. The firm fixed price will take
- 3 care of that and those other ancillary fees
- 4 and taxes should remain outside of the fare.
- 5 I believe some are looking at how
- 6 they are going to charge this offset in the EU
- 7 countries. And it is going to be difficult to
- 8 track. But we'll continue to talk about that
- 9 and discuss that on the international markets.
- 10 MS. SINGLETARY: Hi, this is Lisa
- 11 Singletary. I've got a -- actually I've got
- 12 two and I don't know the appropriateness of
- 13 the first question but I'm going to ask
- 14 anyway.
- 15 Is there a report that shows the
- 16 revenue made from the ancillary fees charges
- 17 by the airlines? Since they started charging
- 18 them, is there a report that shows the revenue
- 19 made?
- 20 And my second question is whether
- 21 or not I can recommend that we bring in the
- 22 TMCs at some point to discuss the churning

- 1 fees and the conditions in which they receive
- 2 the debit memos.
- 3 MR. BRISTOW: Okay. Thank you.
- 4 We don't get a report on the
- 5 ancillary fees. Because we purchase
- 6 commercial type practice is actually what
- 7 we're doing so we're not getting a report back
- 8 on that. Where you can possibly get those on
- 9 the ancillary fees is an accumulation of your
- 10 reports on your vouchers. So that may be an
- 11 opportunity to take a look at where those
- 12 other ancillary type fees are being charged.
- 13 Okay?
- 14 MS. SINGLETARY: I'm sorry, who is
- 15 this responding? I didn't get your name.
- 16 MR. BRISTOW: It's Jerry Bristow.
- 17 And I'm sorry, your second question was?
- 18 MS. SINGLETARY: Recommending
- 19 bringing in the TMCs at some point just to
- 20 discuss the churning fees and the conditions
- 21 in which they receive debit memos. I'm
- 22 getting a lot of complaints from my TMC

- 1 regarding that. And --
- 2 MR. BRISTOW: And, and -- okay, I
- 3 don't want to put anybody on the spot here but
- 4 you're on the phone, what travel agency
- 5 services you?
- 6 MS. SINGLETARY: I really don't
- 7 want to put them out there.
- 8 MR. BRISTOW: Okay, that's okay.
- 9 I just wanted to say that we've been working
- 10 with a debit memo group on all of these
- 11 issues. It includes the carriers, the travel
- 12 agencies, audits. DTMO has been there. We've
- 13 been there. We've been working on this since
- 14 last June.
- We're having a meeting next week
- 16 at the SGTP, the Society of Government Travel
- 17 Professionals Education Conference next week
- 18 and debit memos is on the agenda for the TMC
- 19 forum.
- 20 MS. SINGLETARY: Are they
- 21 reporting on -- for the charges that they
- 22 received, the revenue generated from that?

- 1 MR. BRISTOW: No, no, this is on
- 2 the debit memos for the churning. This is on
- 3 the debit memo for the churning. If you --
- 4 you may want to contact your TMC and advise
- 5 them that they need to be in attendance at
- 6 that meeting next week if they've not already
- 7 been attending.
- 8 MS. SINGLETARY: Okay.
- 9 MR. BRISTOW: Thank you.
- 10 MR. ROSENMEIER: Hello?
- 11 MR. BRISTOW: Yes, do you have a
- 12 question?
- MR. ROSENMEIER: Hi, this is John
- 14 Rosenmeier for the VA. Who was the last lady
- 15 that was just talking?
- MS. SINGLETARY: Lisa Singletary
- 17 from the Department of Commerce.
- 18 MR. ROSENMEIER: Do you mind if I
- 19 give you a call after this or later this
- 20 afternoon?
- 21 MS. SINGLETARY: Absolutely.
- MR. ROSENMEIER: What's your phone

- 1 number please.
- 2 MS. SINGLETARY: 202-482-1185.
- 3 MR. ROSENMEIER: Thank you. Yes,
- 4 I'm from the VA and I have similar issues.
- 5 MR. BRISTOW: Okay. Thank you.
- 6 MS. SINGLETARY: Okay.
- 7 MR. SZNAJDER: Gary Sznajder from
- 8 Continental Airlines. I just wanted a
- 9 clarification on debit memo. Is debit memo
- 10 the way, in the final language, only going to
- 11 pertain to churning? Period?
- MR. BRISTOW: Debit memos only
- 13 pertain to churning, period, on government
- 14 fares, period.
- MR. SZNAJDER: That's it?
- MR. BRISTOW: Period.
- 17 MR. SZNAJDER: Thank you.
- 18 MS. GULICK: Yes, Barbara Gulick
- 19 from National Science Foundation. This fare
- 20 that I see, this one-way fare on AA, American
- 21 Airlines, of 370, that does not include fuel
- 22 surcharge and the baggage fees I see, so that

- 1 fare should be pretty accurate, what I should
- 2 see from my TMC. That includes all taxes.
- 3 MR. BRISTOW: No.
- 4 MS. GULICK: No?
- 5 MR. BRISTOW: No, it does not
- 6 include all taxes. That's the issue. Right.
- 7 MS. GULICK: Okay.
- 8 MR. BRISTOW: It does not include
- 9 your facility charges, in other words because
- 10 we don't know what airport you may be
- 11 connecting through, it doesn't include your
- 12 security charges for TSA or your segment fees,
- 13 okay? That's what that disclaimer was on the
- 14 front when you enter into this calculator.
- MS. GULICK: Okay. Thank you. Is
- 16 there like a website that we can get an idea
- 17 so that we can be more accurate for those
- 18 fees?
- 19 MR. BRISTOW: No, it's not until
- 20 the ticket is issued. Okay? You're welcome.
- 21 Any other questions? Any other
- 22 questions on the phone? Oh, I'm sorry.

- 1 MR. DAVID FLYNN: This is David
- 2 Flynn with HHS. I just -- one of the things
- 3 I've noticed this past year was United
- 4 started, I guess, reserving half of the plane,
- 5 the front half of the plane, making it harder
- 6 for my employees to get reserved seating
- 7 whenever they book their tickets. Can we
- 8 address that?
- 9 Because I know that Continental,
- 10 or at least from what I've heard in the past,
- 11 that Continental has not participated in the
- 12 City Pair Program because they didn't want to
- 13 reserve all of their seats or have them
- 14 available to -- 100 percent of their seats
- 15 available to the government market.
- 16 MR. BRISTOW: Okay. Last seat
- 17 availability and seat choice are two different
- 18 areas that I'll address on that.
- 19 Last seat availability, I believe,
- 20 it's Continental. So I'm not going to speak
- 21 to it. But you wanted to have it in the
- 22 bucket, correct?

- 1 MR. SZNAJDER: You are controlling
- 2 where a carrier puts their _CA fare in because
- 3 of the language that you say it must be above
- 4 the third bucket. My buckets today are priced
- 5 upon a certain rate. And that rate puts it in
- 6 a bucket. That's difficult to do right now.
- 7 MR. BRISTOW: Right. The other
- 8 one is seat choice. Airlines -- and I'm going
- 9 to defend United a little bit because you said
- 10 at the beginning of this year they've actually
- 11 opened up their seat allotments for seat
- 12 assignments. Okay? And airlines do hold seat
- 13 assignments for seat choice.
- Some of those are emergency exit
- 15 rows where they have to physically see
- 16 somebody that's going to be able to operate
- 17 the door, be able to function appropriately.
- 18 Some are their new economy plus type seats,
- 19 which give you more room.
- We have watched that very closely.
- 21 And most carriers allocate about eight
- 22 percent of their aircraft for those different

- 1 types of seat choices. We don't believe that
- 2 the government agencies are targeted to get
- 3 middle seats in the back of the airplane. We
- 4 really don't.
- 5 Sometimes it is when we make our
- 6 reservations and how we get our seat
- 7 assignments. So if we're making our
- 8 reservations just seven days out, some of
- 9 those good seats may not be available as in
- 10 aisle or window seats.
- 11 What we have seen, though, is that
- 12 if you utilize your frequent traveler numbers,
- 13 it expands and opens up that seat map for you
- 14 to be able to see all those available seats
- 15 and not just limited to just those others.
- 16 They take into consideration connections, if
- 17 you are in a connection airport, flights that
- 18 are coming in, whether or not they are late or
- 19 not, whether or not they allow that flight to
- 20 go, especially on the international
- 21 connections.
- 22 Airlines do a really good job in

- 1 assisting us to get those seat assignments.
- 2 So I hope that answers your question. And I
- 3 know that Tom wants to say something.
- 4 MR. BILLONE: Tom Billone, United
- 5 Airlines. And earlier -- well, actually late
- 6 last year, we went on a tour, took GSA and a
- 7 representative of the State Department on a
- 8 tour. Left Dulles Airport on a departing
- 9 international flight and showed how the
- 10 background, how seat assignments are done if a
- 11 person doesn't have a seat, showed him how the
- 12 lists worked, so it was very eye-opening for
- 13 everybody to find out how, if you get to the
- 14 airport -- the idea is to get everybody on
- 15 that aircraft because it costs us money if
- 16 they don't get on.
- 17 Some people don't want to wait to
- 18 get a seat assignment and they buy up to
- 19 economy plus. That's a choice. You have
- 20 three options to opt out of buying economy
- 21 plus even if you're doing the check-in and
- 22 show.

- 1 The one thing that I was hoping to
- 2 hear in this meeting was the definition of
- 3 last seat availability being changed to
- 4 reference inventory versus a seat because when
- 5 you put the word seat in there, a person is
- 6 saying okay, if there is one seat available on
- 7 the plane, I get it before anybody else. And
- 8 that's not what the intent of that was.
- 9 And I thought we had come to an
- 10 agreement in one of our meetings that we were
- 11 going to change that definition to mean the
- 12 purchase of inventory because I still have
- 13 people in various government agencies telling
- 14 me I'm told as soon as I get to the airport
- 15 they have to give me a seat.
- 16 And I'm like no, that's not the
- 17 way that works. So I was hoping that we
- 18 changed that in this contract. Maybe we could
- 19 reword it because that is what is throwing
- 20 some confusion out there.
- 21 When you look at seat, it may be
- 22 semantics but to us, a seat in inventory but

- 1 to everybody else a seat is a seat. And to
- 2 the airlines, we're talking inventory. You
- 3 can buy -- if there's inventory available, you
- 4 can buy that inventory.
- 5 So that's just a little hokey
- 6 change.
- 7 MR. BRISTOW: Please send me your
- 8 verbiage for consideration. Okay?
- 9 MR. BILLONE: Yes, I'll send it to
- 10 you.
- MR. BRISTOW: Okay. Thank you.
- 12 And the reason I ask that is
- 13 because we could come out with the verbiage,
- 14 with the verbiage, with the verbiage, and no,
- 15 that doesn't work, that doesn't work. We want
- 16 to make sure that we're addressing this, that
- 17 it is going to be suitable for you in that
- 18 vein.
- 19 Okay? We may not be able to
- 20 consider it. But we will advise you yes, no,
- 21 or whatever.
- MR. BILLONE: You know me, I'm

- 1 trying to come to a middle ground here.
- 2 MR. ELLIS: You need to be on a
- 3 mic please.
- 4 MR. BRISTOW: You need to be on
- 5 the mic, Tom.
- 6 MR. BILLONE: I've got a mic right
- 7 here.
- 8 MR. ELLIS: I'm going to move Tom
- 9 to the front corner over here.
- 10 (Laughter.)
- 11 MR. BILLONE: Those of you who
- 12 know me, I try to come to a middle ground with
- 13 everything here. And I think, you know, we
- 14 need to come to a middle ground on that. So
- 15 we can work together.
- 16 It's not necessarily what I think
- 17 but I think the industry would accept that as
- 18 proper verbiage that we all could live with
- 19 that will eliminate this confusion, you know,
- 20 about this last seat availability and whether
- 21 a person gets denied boarding or the flight is
- 22 oversold and they don't get a seat. So I

- 1 think that would work.
- 2 MR. BRISTOW: Okay.
- 3 MR. BILLONE: Okay? Not that it's
- 4 necessarily what I want but --
- 5 MR. BRISTOW: Hold on.
- 6 MS. CARLOCK: I need to make sure
- 7 I heard you. Andrea Carlock, DTMO, am I
- 8 hearing you correct by saying that last seat
- 9 availability, in my mind, means regardless, if
- 10 there is a seat, the government person gets
- 11 it. And that is not? Okay.
- MR. BILLONE: That's the issue.
- 13 That's the issue. Last seat availability
- 14 refers to when I go to buy a ticket. Okay,
- 15 there may be one seat left on there -- one
- inventory slot available, one Y available,
- 17 okay?
- Now the aircraft may have 120
- 19 seats but we sell the government 30. All
- 20 right? So there's 129 booked already.
- 21 Normally, as a reservations person, I am
- 22 working in reservations, I cannot sell that

- 1 last inventory piece, seat of inventory, okay?
- 2 I'd have to get somebody to do it for me.
- 3 You can purchase that last Y of
- 4 availability. That does not necessarily mean
- 5 you've got a seat. Okay? It doesn't mean you
- 6 have a seat assignment, okay?
- 7 And if you go to the airport --
- 8 and then the other thing is we don't know how
- 9 many people -- whether the system
- 10 automatically assigns seats or the person gets
- 11 to select their seat. We'd love it if the
- 12 systems automatically assigned seats so we
- 13 wouldn't run into this because we have issues
- 14 where people claim they get to the airport and
- 15 they didn't have a seat. Well, they never
- 16 requested a seat assignment in the first
- 17 place. And those are other issues, okay? On
- 18 their initial booking, we didn't look for a
- 19 seat assignment.
- 20 So when you get to the airport, if
- 21 you don't have a seat when you're checking in,
- 22 you're using the kiosk, the kiosk will give

- 1 you an option to purchase up to economy plus,
- 2 all right? Some people buy it. They think
- 3 they're going to get a seat.
- 4 If you don't get it, you get a
- 5 boarding pass which is a departure management
- 6 card. And you wait. And then now they tell
- 7 us in most of clubs, you can see where you are
- 8 -- you can see how many seats are left and it
- 9 says confirmed awaiting seat assignments so
- 10 you know if there are 50 seats left and you
- 11 are number three on the list, you're going to
- 12 get your seat assignment. But it's going to
- 13 be like maybe 45 minutes prior to the plane's
- 14 departure when you get that seat assignment.
- So there may be times where you
- 16 don't get on, all right? So say economy plus
- is the only thing that's left, all right,
- 18 nobody has bought up to economy plus. The
- 19 traveler is going to get economy plus at no
- 20 charge. They'll get a seat assignment in
- 21 economy plus at no charge.
- 22 So they can wait and actually get

- 1 an upgrade at no cost. But there are
- 2 instances, and we just did a study, where
- 3 people -- yes, they are either denied boarding
- 4 voluntarily or involuntarily. And, again, we
- 5 went through the whole process. We try not to
- 6 -- we try to get everybody on the aircraft.
- 7 If it is an overseas flight, which
- 8 is where we have most of the issues, the
- 9 Department of State who has raised the issue a
- 10 number of times, we look at how many first
- 11 class seats are left, how many business class
- 12 seats are left, and how many coach seats are
- 13 left.
- 14 So if somebody is in business
- 15 class and the seat is in first class and we
- 16 need to try to get some seat assignments,
- 17 we'll move people from business class into
- 18 first class. We'll move people from coach
- 19 into business class. And it's going to be
- 20 based on their frequent flyer status, et
- 21 cetera. And that will open up seats in the
- 22 back for other people.

- 1 So there is a whole list. But
- 2 when you make a reservation, last seat
- 3 availability does not mean you have a seat
- 4 assignment.
- 5 MS. CARLOCK: There's the
- 6 difference. Seat versus seat assignment.
- 7 There's the terminology. This is a big issue
- 8 for us in the Department.
- 9 MR. BRISTOW: And our
- 10 understanding on this is that we are able to
- 11 purchase that seat inventory for a specific
- 12 price no matter what. That's our issue on the
- 13 City Pair contract. And that's how we enforce
- 14 that part of it along the way.
- 15 Hold on one second.
- 16 MR. CRAIG FLYNN: This is Craig
- 17 Flynn and I'm the Director of Governmentwide
- 18 Travel Policy. This is a really big issue for
- 19 the agencies because the traveler shows up at
- 20 your kiosk and they see the opportunity to
- 21 upgrade into --
- 22 PARTICIPANT: Economy plus.

- 1 MR. CRAIG FLYNN: -- economy plus,
- 2 different airlines call them different things
- 3 -- they have the opportunity to pay the extra
- 4 -- whatever the dollar amount is, 25, 29
- 5 dollars, whatever. They feel pressured at
- 6 that point that they won't get a seat. This
- 7 is what I'm hearing from the travelers.
- 8 And at that particular point, they
- 9 have made all the personal arrangements to get
- 10 to the airline, getting there on time. The
- 11 Agency has the opportunity to pay for that
- 12 amount of money. The policy allows for that.
- 13 They don't -- usually they don't -
- 14 you know, they don't have the wherewithal to
- 15 call or to make sure that they can get
- 16 approved for this so they feel like this is --
- 17 oh, my gosh, my plane is going to leave. I
- 18 don't have a seat. I'm not sure whether or
- 19 not I should pay this extra money.
- So we need to figure out a way
- 21 that that doesn't enter into the conversation
- 22 of whether or not the travel gets a seat on

- 1 the government airline at the same price.
- 2 MR. BILLONE: Okay, we ran into
- 3 this --
- 4 PARTICIPANT: Microphone please.
- 5 MR. BILLONE: -- believe me I've
- 6 been working on this for four years now so
- 7 it's like a nightmare. We ran into this same,
- 8 I feel pressured into buying a seat. Okay,
- 9 well you're not pressured into buying
- 10 anything. You're given three options to say
- 11 do you want to buy it or not. There's no
- 12 upsell, there's no pressure.
- 13 Say if you don't -- now admittedly
- 14 have some gate agents that go beyond and say
- 15 well, if you really want to get a seat
- 16 assignment right now, you purchase up, okay?
- 17 We're trying to get them not to say anything
- 18 but in reality, it's true. If you really want
- 19 a seat assignment at that moment, you need to
- 20 purchase up.
- 21 But the idea -- and that's -- I
- 22 mean why we did the tour, to show that there

- 1 is no pressure on the person. And there may
- 2 be some pressure the person is putting on
- 3 themselves, okay, which is the education
- 4 process that once you get to the gate area and
- 5 you don't have a seat assignment and you're on
- 6 an international flight 45 minutes prior to
- 7 your departure, you will get your seat
- 8 assignments, okay?
- 9 I mean it's not -- when we look at
- 10 the denied boarding rates, it's infinitesimal.
- 11 So, you know, there's not a whole lot of --
- 12 there's people that volunteer to get on the
- 13 next flight, which is fine. But involuntary,
- 14 there's very few.
- So the process is to get everybody
- 16 on the aircraft by asking for volunteers
- 17 first, get off, give up their seats. And a
- 18 lot of people do that. They're not in a rush.
- 19 They take the next flight two hours later.
- 20 They are confirmed on the next flight and away
- 21 they go.
- 22 The idea that people feel

- 1 pressured, that's pressure they put on
- 2 themselves. And we have talked about is there
- 3 a way to bypass the upsell when you're
- 4 checking in if you are a government traveler.
- 5 And the programming costs to do that, I don't
- 6 think the government wants to take on. To
- 7 change all the kiosk programming to see you as
- 8 a government traveler, click. And then you
- 9 don't get a chance to buy economy plus. It
- 10 just gives you --
- 11 MR. CRAIG FLYNN: Okay. So the
- 12 solution is happening right now with a certain
- 13 Agency that spends a lot of money in travel is
- 14 that if they are not assigned a seat, they are
- 15 choosing, as a policy, to not fly the City
- 16 Pairs. So what happens is --
- 17 MR. BILLONE: But that's not
- 18 policy, that's not --
- 19 MR. CRAIG FLYNN: That's an
- 20 internal policy.
- MR. BILLONE: Well, that's wrong.
- 22 MR. CRAIG FLYNN: Well, wait a

- 1 minute. Let me finish please. I have the
- 2 microphone so they can't record you.
- 3 (Laughter.)
- 4 MR. CRAIG FLYNN: This issue is
- 5 you lose business and it costs the government
- 6 more. So if we don't fix this problem, the
- 7 internal reality is it will cost the
- 8 government more money and you will lose the
- 9 business. So we're going to have to figure
- 10 out a way to figure out how to educate both
- 11 sides.
- MR. BILLONE: Well, I can tell you
- 13 right now we're not changing our policy. It
- 14 is what it is. If we lose money, believe me,
- 15 we make about 300 million dollars a year on
- 16 economy plus. We're not going to change it.
- 17 That is the business sense of this.
- 18 But what you just said, by having
- 19 an Agency policy that violates the City Pair
- 20 contract bothers me. And I'm hoping that GSA
- 21 does something about that because there are
- 22 several government agencies out there that are

- 1 doing that. And the lack of a seat assignment
- 2 is not a reason for flying the non-contract
- 3 carrier.
- 4 MR. BRISTOW: Okay. Can I have
- 5 the microphone please?
- 6 Thank you. Great discussions here.
- 7 Don't think we haven't had this discussion
- 8 along those lines. What we did find is that
- 9 they're not targeting government travelers.
- 10 What we did find it was not systemic across
- 11 their system. It was in pockets of areas,
- 12 pockets of specific type flights that had
- other circumstances wrapped around them.
- 14 And what we did see also is that
- 15 they have opened this up to travel agencies to
- 16 contact their member to assist them in getting
- 17 those seat assignments so that when they come
- 18 to the airport, they're ready to go.
- 19 What we're also seeing is the
- 20 people get to the airport later and later,
- 21 security lines get longer and longer, and all
- 22 of a sudden, their seat assignments are gone

- 1 because they are canceling them out now 45
- 2 minutes prior to departure.
- What I have to say is get to the
- 4 airport on time, if not early, have your seat
- 5 assignments available to you even if you have
- 6 a middle seat. Go to the ticket counter and
- 7 ask if they can exchange that for an aisle or
- 8 a window seat and they will accommodate you.
- 9 Specifically what we wanted to
- 10 make sure was we were not being targeted for
- 11 denied boarding. And I mean involuntary
- 12 denied boarding where our people could not
- 13 meet their missions.
- We've taken this very seriously.
- 15 We want to make sure that we're covering all
- 16 of this for you. We encourage everybody to
- 17 tell us when they have these issues and report
- 18 those back to us. And we will look into it.
- 19 Like I said, we made sure that it
- 20 was not systemic across the board, it was not
- 21 targeting our customers in any way whatsoever,
- 22 and that they opened up additional seats,

- 1 placed us in a different bucket, moved us
- 2 along. So they really did a good job taking
- 3 it to heart when we had this discussion.
- 4 So is it fixed? I don't think it
- 5 is ever going to be fixed across the board. I
- 6 believe sometimes we have the carriers that do
- 7 as much business with us as they do, it also
- 8 exposes them to these other issues. And the
- 9 more business they win in the award, the more
- 10 exposure they have to these types of
- 11 incidents.
- 12 We continue to monitor that. We
- 13 want to make sure that our travelers are being
- 14 treated appropriately when they get to the
- 15 gate. From the time they make the
- 16 reservations until the time they get on the
- 17 airplane and get home, we want them to have a
- 18 really good experience as well.
- 19 Any other questions?
- 20 MR. ROSENMEIER: Hi, this is Jon
- 21 from the VA.
- MR. BRISTOW: Go ahead.

- 1 MR. ROSENMEIER: Yes, going back
- 2 to the slides, it sounded like on slide 7
- 3 there was some kind of definition for debit
- 4 memos which it didn't appear on the slide. It
- 5 sounded like someone read it out. Was that
- 6 intentional? Or is that something that was --
- 7 MR. BRISTOW: You want me to take
- 8 a look.
- 9 MR. ROSENMEIER: Yes, I'm sorry to
- 10 ask you.
- 11 MR. ELLIS: They might have --
- 12 Jerry?
- MR. BRISTOW: I'm sorry. It
- 14 wasn't included in the package. I'm sorry.
- 15 We made an alteration to it.
- MR. ROSENMEIER: Oh, okay.
- 17 MR. BRISTOW: But we'll have that
- 18 back out in full view, okay, when we get this
- 19 done, all right?
- 20 MR. ROSENMEIER: That's great.
- 21 And also on slide 6, there was a definition of
- 22 the churning.

- 1 MR. BRISTOW: Right.
- 2 MR. ROSENMEIER: Am I inferring
- 3 correctly that the airlines are giving you
- 4 some push back including this into the City
- 5 Pair fares?
- 6 MR. BRISTOW: Oh, that's correct.
- 7 But we've agreed to work this through in the
- 8 next couple weeks and see if we can't move
- 9 this along.
- 10 MR. ROSENMEIER: And if that's the
- 11 case, if they are pushing back on this, what
- 12 is their preference? Is their preference that
- 13 we book immediately? And then if we change
- 14 our mind, cancel it and re-book?
- MR. BRISTOW: Now that's exactly
- 16 their preference not to have you do it. So
- 17 you can make those changes to the flights
- 18 inside the record but not to cancel and then
- 19 re-book, which is creating another issue.
- 20 MR. ROSENMEIER: Okay. Because
- 21 yes, because from what I understand of
- 22 churning, I don't know, it sounded like our

- 1 ETS usage is different from the other agencies
- 2 because we're allowed to hold, I guess, the
- 3 reservation for a government contract airline
- 4 up to 24 hours up to the departure whereas it
- 5 sounds like the agencies have a shorter
- 6 window.
- 7 But if we were even held, I guess,
- 8 to the same standard as they were and had a
- 9 shorter time frame, 48 hours or whatever the
- 10 case may be, if we make a reservation and make
- 11 a change within that reservation, I guess
- 12 that's when the churning occurs?
- 13 MR. ELLIS: Right. Well, it
- 14 sounds like your ETS system allows you to book
- 15 and hold and it does not have an auto-
- 16 cancellation if it's not ticketed within 24 or
- 17 48 hours. So your agency is not one of the
- 18 problems.
- 19 MR. ROSENMEIER: Okay, yes,
- 20 because we only have that rule when it is a
- 21 non-contract fare.
- MR. ELLIS: Right.

- 1 MR. BRISTOW: Yes, Jon, we can
- 2 further discuss that on your agency as well.
- 3 Thanks.
- 4 MR. ROSENMEIER: Okay. I just
- 5 wanted to make sure I was clear on that. So
- 6 thank you.
- 7 MR. BRISTOW: Okay. We're getting
- 8 wound down here. Any other questions?
- 9 (No response.)
- 10 MR. BRISTOW: Any other questions
- 11 on the phone?
- 12 (No response.)
- MR. BRISTOW: As always, it's
- 14 lively here.
- 15 (Laughter.)
- 16 MR. BRISTOW: And we appreciate
- 17 your attendance. Thank you very much for your
- 18 candor. Safe travels back to your homes. And
- 19 thanks again for your attendance. I
- 20 appreciate it.
- 21 (Whereupon, the above-entitled
- 22 conference was concluded at 2:36 p.m.)

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