

ABA Position Paper

Motorcoach Solutions to Airport Congestion

Issue

Changes are needed to federal planning requirements and funding programs to promote better access for motorcoaches to support an essential ground transport link and to assist in overall congestion relief and promote clean air on the premises and around airports.

Background

Motorcoaches provide intercity, commuter, airport shuttle and charter and tour group connections to airports every day. This service provides an essential ground transportation link in the intermodal chain and alleviates the congestion caused by automobile traffic into airports. Additionally, many airports do not currently meet air quality attainment levels required under the Clean Air Act. The major source of emissions at airports is not from airplanes, but from cars. Motorcoaches take cars off the road reducing congestion, overall emissions, and fuel consumption at airports and elsewhere.

While most airports work to be self-sustaining, in practice they often (if not always) rely heavily on federal funding support. Federally-funded airport development projects are subject to grant assurances that require airports to provide intercity buses access to their airports to the maximum extent practicable. Yet, too often motorcoaches face barriers to airport access. Those barriers range from excessive fees, denial of curbside access, lack of involvement in the planning process, and systems and infrastructure obstacles to efficient motorcoach service. Furthermore, the fees airports often charge to motorcoach operators violate the federal prohibition on imposing state or local fees on motor carriers of passengers traveling in interstate commerce. These fees, sometimes as high as \$50 or more per vehicle per visit, could well run into the tens of thousands of dollars per year for a bus company that uses the Airport on a regular basis.

ABA Position

Barriers to effective motorcoach service to airports must be addressed as part of overall airport planning. From airport design to downtown transportation centers, facilities must be designed to incorporate access for multiple modes of transportation including consideration of parking, traffic coordination, and pick-up and drop-off for motorcoach traffic. Airport authorities should be required to include intercity bus service access and connections in their planning process to alleviate congestion, promote clean air and foster security efforts. Bus access improvements at and near airports should be eligible to receive airport improvement funds. (July 2006)