

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell today called current flight delays “unacceptable” during a House Aviation Subcommittee hearing examining the rising flight delays. The hearing follows news from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics that flight delays in the first seven months of 2007 were the worst since the Bureau began keeping detailed statistics.

“To anyone who’s flown recently, it will hardly come as a shock to learn that airline delays have gone from bad to worse,” said Mitchell. “These numbers are astonishing and simply unacceptable. The flying public deserves better.”

According to the Bureau, nearly 28 percent of flights between January and July 2007 were delayed. [See: <http://www.transtats.bts.gov/HomeDrillChart.asp>]

Mitchell said the most disturbing numbers are the rapid growth in on-board tarmac delays. According to the Department of Transportation’s Inspector General, in the first seven months of 2007, “More than 54,000 flights affecting 3.7 million passengers experienced taxi-in and taxi-out times of 1 to 5 hours of more. This is an increase of nearly 42 percent as compared to the same period in 2006.”

Yesterday, the Department of Transportation’s Inspector General released a report finding that between January and July 2007,

“Nearly 28 percent of flights were delayed, cancelled or diverted, with airline’s on-time performance at the lowest percentage (72 percent) recorded in the last 10 years.

“Not only are there more delays, but also longer delay periods. Of those flights arriving late, passengers experienced a record-breaking average flight arrival delay of 57 minutes, up nearly 3 minutes from 2006.” [see: [http://www.oig.dot.gov/StreamFile?file=/data/pdffdocs/Testimony_WEB_FILE_CC2007099_\(2\).pdf](http://www.oig.dot.gov/StreamFile?file=/data/pdffdocs/Testimony_WEB_FILE_CC2007099_(2).pdf)]