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Congress of the United States
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December 18, 2017

The Honorable Mayor Rahm Emanuel
City of Chicago
121 N. LaSalle Street, 5th Floor
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Mayor Emanuel:

On December 17, a power outage at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport caused massive disruptions to travelers in Atlanta and nationwide. Flight operations at the airport were suspended, more than one thousand flights have been delayed or cancelled, and tens of thousands of passengers had their holiday travel disrupted. The delays will ripple for days as passengers are rebooked, planes are repositioned, and flight crews reassigned.

This is not the first time this year that a power outage had global effects on air travel. In May, a power outage at a British Airways facility effectively shut down London's Heathrow airport with similar effects for both flights and passengers.

I am very concerned that a similar incident at O'Hare International Airport would be even more disruptive. O'Hare is a hub for two global airlines, and tens of thousands of passengers connect through O'Hare to their final destinations every day. A 9-hour ground stop at O'Hare could have global consequences and cause severe disruptions for both passengers and cargo operations.

To help Congress understand the issue and find ways to prevent such disruptions from happening again, I respectfully request that the City of Chicago and the Chicago Department of Aviation perform and make public an analysis of what would happen to both flights and travelers should O'Hare lose power. In addition, I ask that the City of Chicago and the Chicago Department of Aviation provide information regarding the backup systems in place now at O'Hare to prevent such a power outage and how such a system will be expanded to accommodate the O'Hare Modernization Program.

O'Hare's position in domestic and global aviation is too important to leave anything to chance. I will be sending a similar letter to U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and will work with my congressional colleagues to increase federal oversight and resources for critical aviation systems.

Sincerely,



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress