

JOHN L. MICA  
7TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

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**COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION**

**Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0907**

March 5, 2002

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Read Van de Water  
Assistant Secretary  
Aviation & International Affairs  
400 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20590  
PH:366-8822

Dear Ms. Van de Water:

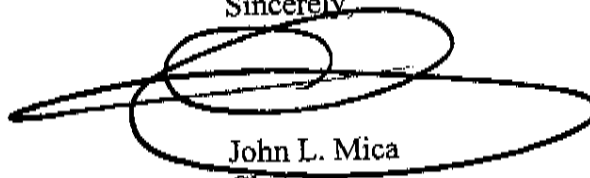
I am writing concerning the Department's ongoing review of developments relating to the major air carriers joint venture known as Orbitz. It is my understanding that the Department of Transportation will be providing information to assist the Inspector General in evaluating whether the Orbitz joint venture is facilitating anti-competitive behavior by the carrier-owners of Orbitz.

As you are aware, the five major domestic air carriers have formed a joint venture to sell air travel on the Internet. Concerns have been raised from antitrust experts, state attorneys general, and consumer groups regarding potential anti-competitive behavior.

Among the principal concerns identified is that the airline owners of Orbitz refuse to make their cheapest fares – so-called webfares – available to other online travel sites. Some of these other sites claim that they are willing to make the same arrangement that Orbitz has made with the airlines to list those lower fares but the airlines will not discuss such arrangements with them. Orbitz, of course, disputes these claims. If airlines are indeed giving more favorable treatment to the on-line travel agency that it owns, that would seem to be anti-competitive and the Department should take appropriate action to eliminate such conduct.

In closing, I urge you to be thorough in your review and, if necessary, swift in fashioning an effective remedy if the evidence shows behavior violating antitrust principles. I look forward to seeing the findings of your review.

Sincerely,



John L. Mica  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Aviation