A Necessary Change



Photo: Embraer 175 LR, Horizon Air (Alaska Airlines / News Hub)

Progress requires leadership engagement, fair contracts, and a clear plan for the future

HORIZON AIR PILOTS
APA Teamsters Local 1224

Fellow Horizon Air Pilots,

For nearly three years, the pilots of Horizon Air (a subsidiary of Alaska Air Group, Inc.) have been engaged in contract negotiations under the framework of federal labor law. In the airline industry, our contracts do not expire but instead become amendable, fostering an environment that incentivizes employers to prolong negotiations as a way of achieving cost savings. Throughout the process, your union has approached the table prepared, professional, and committed to reaching a fair agreement that reflects the work we do and the responsibility we carry.

What we have not seen is meaningful progress.

At some point, honesty requires us to say out loud what many pilots already feel: the current approach is not working.

Horizon Air pilots are not asking for special treatment. We are seeking sound solutions to systemic issues and asking for an industry-standard contract—one that reflects the realities of today's airline industry and helps Horizon Air to retain and attract a stable, professional pilot workforce.



A Pattern of Mismanagement or Just Corporate Greed?

This is not simply a disagreement over numbers. This is a pattern of mismanagement or corporate greed that has spilled into the bargaining process itself. The Horizon Air pilots have become the shock absorber for corporate decisions and systemic failures.

Good-faith bargaining requires problem-solving, a shared commitment to resolution, and movement. That commitment is absent.

While pilots are asked to be patient, we see decisions that prioritize short-term financial appearances over long-term operational health. Staffing remains strained. Operational reliability increasingly depends on pilots absorbing more risk and more disruption.

IT breakdowns, operational meltdowns, and planning shortfalls do not disappear—they land squarely on pilots' shoulders. Customer service suffers when staffing, scheduling, and infrastructure are stretched thin, leading to extended tarmac waits after on-time arrivals, missed connections, or cancellations.

At the same time, corporate priorities such as stock buybacks and financial optics continue, while investment in staffing, training, and operational resilience lags behind. The result is a workforce asked to compensate for failures it did not create. Without a contract that resolves core issues or adequately acknowledges that burden, experienced pilots leave for better opportunities, further exasperating staffing and training issues.

Customers, investors, and employees would all benefit from a renewed focus on staffing and training.

Mismanagement and corporate greed are often discussed as abstract ideas. For pilots, they are tangible.

They show up when pilots are asked to do more with less, while executive priorities remain untouched. They show up when prolonged negotiations result in years of stagnant wages, while the company benefits from the professionalism and stability pilots continue to provide. They show up when federal labor law is used as a shield for inaction rather than a tool for resolution.

Bad-faith bargaining has consequences. It erodes trust, damages morale, and introduces long-term risk into an operation that depends on precision, experience, and accountability. Airlines do not succeed despite their pilots—they succeed because of them.

Changing Course

For three years of negotiations, your union has worked to attain an agreement. We have responded to proposals, corrected the record, and waited for meaningful engagement. That approach has run its course.

It's time to broaden the conversation.

Proposing solutions to resolve broader operational issues with those at the bargaining table who do not have the power to enact meaningful change is wasted time. The process is broken. It's time we engage those who have a direct interest in the long-term health of Horizon Air—the communities we serve, Alaska Air Group, Inc. (ALK) investors, and other industry stakeholders. We must ensure that the story told outside the company reflects the reality lived inside it.

Expanded communication, greater transparency, and increased visibility into the union's efforts start today.

Prolonged labor instability is not neutral. It creates operational risk, financial uncertainty, and reputational damage.

This is not about theatrics or headlines. It is about accountability and meaningful change. Every day, Horizon Air pilots operate a safe, reliable airline under challenging conditions because professionalism is the foundation of who we are. We deserve a contract that reflects that same level of seriousness and respect.

The time for waiting has passed. The time for change is now.

In Unity,

Henry Simkins · Wayne Ayars · Joel Eisenfeld · Mychal Hornbeck · Sean Lenney

Horizon Air Pilots Executive Council
Airline Professionals Association, Teamsters Local 1224
https://www.apa1224.org