

U.S. Transportation Secretary to Visit Cuba



Havana, August 30 (RHC)-- U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx will arrive on Wednesday, August 31st, at the Santa Clara airport aboard the first regular commercial flight connecting Cuba and the United States in more than 50 years.

In statements to reporters on Monday, Cuban Assistant Transportation Minister Eduardo Rodríguez announced that Foxx will then travel to Havana to meet with his Cuban counterpart, Adel Yzquierdo, and Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez.

The U.S. Transportation Secretary first visited Cuba last February for the signing of the civil aviation pact reestablishing regular commercial flights between the United States and the Caribbean state.

The arrival on Wednesday of the first flight connecting Cuba and the United States - a JetBlue flight between Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Santa Clara - is "a positive step in the process of improving relations between the two countries," said Assistant Minister Rodriguez on Monday at a Havana press conference.

He emphasized though that restrictions imposed by the U.S. economic blockade on Cuba are still in place and, which among other things, "prevent U.S. citizens from traveling freely to Cuba as tourists."

The memorandum of understanding on civil aviation signed in February establishes 20 daily flights to Havana and 10 to the country's other international airports, or up to 110 arrivals and departures per day, which presages a sharp increase in two-way air traffic in the coming months.

Besides JetBlue, Silver Airlines and American Airlines are already authorized to run regular routes to Cuba, Silver connecting Santa Clara with Fort Lauderdale starting on September 1st and American beginning flights to Camagüey and Holguin, in eastern Cuba, starting on September 7th and to the world-famous beach resort Varadero beginning on September 11th.

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