United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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Nicholas E. Calio
President & CEO
Airlines for America
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20004

Tony Tyler
Director General & CEO
International Air Transport Association USA
1201 F Street, Northwest
Suite 650
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Messrs. Calio and Tyler,

Earlier this summer, an African lion named Cecil – well-known and beloved by his local community in Zimbabwe – was tragically killed and maimed by trophy hunters. This repugnant, reprehensible act has rightfully drawn the ire of the American public and shocked supporters of wildlife worldwide.

Sadly, Cecil's killing was not an isolated incident. This vicious act was the latest consequence of the inhumane commercial trophy hunting industry. The perverse desire of some individuals – many of whom are from America – to acquire an animal trophy fuels the demand for this cruel industry. The individual who killed Cecil reportedly paid a fee of $50,000 to destroy a priceless animal. Such practices have had devastating consequences for wildlife populations, including endangered species that have already been decimated by other factors including habitat encroachment. The population of wild lions has decreased by more than 40 percent over the last twenty-one years, and trophy hunting has been a factor in that appalling decline.

Americans who engage in trophy hunting do so because they are confident that they will be able to transport their trophies back to the United States with ease, including by airline. Passenger and freight airlines that permit shipment of animal trophies aid and abet trophy hunting and these abhorrent acts of barbarism. We were very pleased to see Delta's announcement yesterday that it will ban the shipment of any trophies from the so-called Africa Big Five: lions, elephants, rhinos, leopards, and buffalo. American Airlines, United Airlines, and some international airlines have also announced similar prohibitions. These airlines have clearly recognized their responsibility and influence in this area, and we are glad that they chose to take on trophy hunters and the trouble that trophy hunting represents. However, there are other carriers that you represent which have an important role to play in stopping trophy hunting. As long as even one carrier will transport trophies into the United States, these individuals have a way to bring their ill-gotten goods home for display.

We are writing to request more information about the policies of your member airlines regarding the shipment of animal trophies. Specifically, we request responses to the following questions:

- What are the current policies of your member airlines that operate in the United States regarding the shipment of animal trophies?

- Will you confirm that your member airlines that operate in the United States will immediately enact prohibitions on the shipment of animal trophies, if they haven't already?

Your member airlines would be powerful allies in the fight against inhumane trophy hunting, and we hope that we can work together on this incredibly important issue going forward. We appreciate your attention to this request and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate

Cory A. Booker
United States Senate