

Eliminating security screenings at airport 'does not comply with federal law'



By Aaron Scheinblum, KCRG-TV9 | Posted: Thu 7:36 PM, Aug 02, 2018 | Updated: Fri 10:10 AM, Aug 03, 2018

DUBUQUE, Iowa (KCRG-TV9) -- Some staff members at local airports were stunned to see a report today that TSA is considering removing security measures from smaller airports.

A CNN report says removing those checkpoints would save \$115 million of taxpayer money per year.



Robert Grierson, Aviation Director of Dubuque Regional Airport, was surprised to see the headlines- changes that if put into place today would directly affect the airport he oversees.

"I think that it's dead on arrival, and hopefully our legislators will ensure it's dead on arrival," Grierson said.

In an interview with TV9, Grierson explained the change to eliminate security checkpoints at smaller airports is unlikely- based on current laws in place.

"They are required by federal law under TSR 1540 (1540.107) to screen every passenger and every bag," Grierson said. "This does not comply with federal law."

The report says the change could come to airports with planes of 60 seats or less. Grierson added the Dubuque Regional Airport has discussed going from planes with 50 seats to 70 seats, but that decision is ultimately up to the airlines.



"So if that's the case, it wouldn't affect us," Grierson said. "But it would adversely affect another five commercial airports within the state of Iowa."

Grierson said if this is a measure to save taxpayer dollars, it is not worth the safety risk.

"To break that, for an arbitrary reason like we want to save a little money, is going in the wrong direction," Grierson said.

Grierson added if this change went into effect, it would leave all airlines vulnerable- meaning if a flight goes from Dubuque to a hub like Chicago, even more passengers are at risk.

TV9 contacted TSA directly. They responded with a statement from Michael Bilello, Assistant Administrator, Public Affairs for TSA. The statement says in part: "There has been no decision to eliminate passenger screening at any federalized U.S. airport... Any potential operational changes to better allocate limited taxpayer resources are simply part of predecisional discussions and deliberations and would not take place without a risk assessment to ensure the security of the aviation system."

The full statement from Bilello is below:

"There has been no decision to eliminate passenger screening at any federalized U.S. airport. TSA remains committed to its core mission to secure the Homeland by screening more than 2.5 million airline passengers per day. Every year as part of the federal budget process TSA is asked to discuss potential operational efficiencies—this year is no different. Any potential operational changes to better allocate limited taxpayer resources are simply part of predecisional discussions and deliberations and would not take place without a risk assessment to ensure the security of the aviation system."

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TSR 1540 (1540.107)



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