IPATA Response to DOT Statement on Emotional Support Animals

After a year of review, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has released a statement regarding enforcement of emotional support animals (ESAs). As of right now, these are guidelines and not legally binding and airlines have 30 days to comply. The International Pet and Animal Transportation Association (IPATA) submitted comments on behalf of its members.

IPATA applauds the DOT for their effort in putting forth guidelines that will be fair for both the pet owners as well as the airlines. We all want to work together and provide the support to those who legitimately require ESAs. These guidelines will help airlines take a stand against fraudulent travelers.

Among the new guidelines, airlines can require documentation related to the animal's vaccination, training or behavior to determine whether an animal poses a threat to the health or safety of others. IPATA strongly supports this guideline; we have long been advocating that airlines should have the right to require this documentation for each animal attempting to board its aircraft, for the safety of all passengers; and the ability to reject those without the appropriate paperwork.