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May 11, 2011

Mr. Jeffery A. Smisek  
President and CEO  
United Continental Holdings, Inc.                      Via Fax: 713-324-2087  
77 W. Wacker Drive  
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Dear Mr. Smisek:

While we welcome the sentiments in United Continental Holdings' new Eco-Skies ad campaign – "Admiring the earth from 30,000 feet and working to protect it" – it's troubling that your company is actively working to undercut a crucial initiative for achieving such protections.

Eco-Skies says that "At United Continental Holdings, we are committed to leading commercial aviation as an environmentally responsible company by taking actions today that shape an environmentally sustainable future, while continuing to comply with applicable laws and regulations." Yet your company is suing in the European Court of Justice to block a new European law that holds all airlines accountable for their global warming pollution resulting from flights to, from and within the European Union. And your company is lobbying the U.S. Congress to declare the EU law invalid.

If in fact United Continental Holdings is committed to protecting the earth, it makes no sense to spend your customers' money on lawyers and lobbyists in an effort to thwart a crucial anti-pollution program. The European Union deserves kudos, not lawsuits, for acting to reduce airline pollution – particularly given that the international community has proven incapable of doing so despite more than a dozen years of negotiations.

Other airlines – including other legacy carriers as well as business-jet and low-cost carriers – are moving to comply with the EU law. Innovation, not obstruction, is what's needed now. We urge you to drop the lawsuit, and join the future of low-carbon aviation by making your actions consistent with your words.

Sincerely,

Kierán Suckling, Executive Director  
Center for Biological Diversity

Trip Van Noppen, President  
Earthjustice

Margie Alt, Executive Director  
Environment America

Fred Krupp, President  
Environmental Defense Fund

Frances Beinecke, President  
Natural Resources Defense Council

Michael Brune, Executive Director  
Sierra Club