

[Logo]

We seek support for a “preclearance” arrangement operated by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at the Taoyuan International Airport, which is the primary international point of entry to Taiwan.

Preclearance is a program that places CBP officers in foreign airports to screen American and foreign travelers bound for the United States at the point of origin, rather than upon arrival in America. Travelers present their passports and luggage for inspection before their flight in a similar manner to what they would do upon arrival at a U.S. port of entry.

Congress has funded such programs at airports in Canada, Ireland, and Bermuda, among others, because of their many economic and security benefits. CBP is able to stop travelers who are not admissible to the United States at the point of origin. Passengers can begin their vacation or business trip immediately upon arrival, rather than face potentially long lines after their flight. Airlines are freed from using only international gates and international airports in the United States, and can tighten their connections to domestic flights. Tourism-dependent destinations in the United States benefit from ease of travel (a major reason Florida’s representatives advocated preclearance in Canada).

Taoyuan Airport makes great sense for preclearance expansion. The airport has a mixture of flights operated by U.S. and Taiwanese carriers with nonstop-service to the west and east coasts. Taiwan is America’s ninth-largest trading partner. All current preclearance operations, as well as one recently approved for Brussels, are located in Europe, the Caribbean, Canada, or the Middle East. Taoyuan would be a way to expand the program to East Asia with a modest-sized airport. (It would not preclude a future arrangement with Japan, about which there have been on-again, off-again talks with the Japanese government.)

Preclearance would also be a symbol of the strong relationship between Taiwan and the United States, especially at a time when China increasingly subjects Taiwan to belligerent statements and military displays. It would further enhance law-enforcement cooperation between Taiwan and the United States. Taiwan’s president and other political leaders support preclearance at Taoyuan, which should ensure negotiations move quickly.

Preclearance operations are typically funded through a cost-sharing agreement, often including a per-ticket surcharge for those travelling on a precleared flight. Taoyuan Airport has filed its application with CBP, but exact costs are still being calculated. In the meantime, statements of support and report language supporting preclearance at Taoyuan Airport would be helpful in advancing the program.

This material is distributed by Navigators Global LLC on behalf of Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport Corporation, Ltd. (through DC International Advisory, LLC). Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.