

Alaska Air asks court to reconsider minimum-wage ruling

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A boost to \$15 in the minimum wage for many workers at the airport is on hold until the Supreme Court issues a decision on the motion for reconsideration.

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Alaska Airlines has filed a motion asking the state Supreme Court to reconsider its [ruling from last month](#) saying the \$15 minimum-wage law [passed by city of SeaTac voters](#) in 2013 applies to Seattle Tacoma International Airport as well.

That means a boost in the minimum wage for many workers at the airport is on hold until the Supreme Court issues a decision on the motion for reconsideration.

There is no set timeline for when such a decision would be made, said Wendy Ferrell, a Supreme Court spokeswoman.

The Supreme Court had ruled on Aug. 20 that Proposition 1, which raised the minimum wage for hospitality and transportation workers in SeaTac, applied to the airport as well because there's "been no showing that this law would interfere with airport operations."

In the 5-4 decision, the majority also said that a state law granting power to the Port of Seattle over airport operations is intended to give the port exclusive authority over aviation operations but "not to prohibit a local municipality like the city of SeaTac from regulating for the general welfare in a manner unrelated to airport operations."

The ruling, overturning a [lower-court decision](#) that said the airport was not subject to the city's minimum-wage law, was expected to affect some 4,700 people employed at Sea-Tac Airport by contractors, concessionaires and car-rental agencies, according to proponents of the minimum-wage law.

Alaska Airlines, along with the Washington Restaurant Association and airport concessionaires Filo Foods and BF Foods, had 20 days to file a motion for reconsideration with the Supreme Court.

In the motion filed Wednesday afternoon, those organizations said the Supreme Court misinterpreted the state law granting the Port of Seattle exclusive jurisdiction over the airport.

They also contend that Proposition 1 interferes with federal laws regarding the provision of airline services and with federal labor laws.

If the Supreme Court doesn't reconsider its opinions on those issues, Alaska Airlines is asking the justices to allow it to show in trial court that Proposition 1 would interfere with airport operations.

(The Port of Seattle partially joined the motion for reconsideration, asking for clarity on what the scope of its jurisdiction is over the airport.)

"We are seeking a clear and final decision about the validity and scope of Proposition 1," said Herman Wacker, chief legal counsel for Alaska Airlines. "Not just the plaintiffs but all the tenants at Sea-Tac need further direction from the state's highest court on how to comply with the decision. ... Our goal is to get clarity from the supreme court as quickly as possible."

But Sejal Parikh, executive director of Working Washington, which advocated for Proposition 1, called the move by Alaska Airlines a delaying strategy.

"At this point it is clear that you don't have a legal strategy," Parikh wrote in an open letter posted on Working Washington's website. "You have a strategy of delay for delay's sake."

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