DELTA TO LEAVE U.S. AIRLINE TRADE GROUP IN 2016

News /

Delta Air Lines Inc has decided to split from the trade group Airlines for America (A4A), the airline and the group said on Tuesday, a move that could weaken U.S. airlines' ability to lobby as a united front in Washington.

The split, effective in April 2016, comes after Delta has diverged from the group's position that the private sector should help govern the U.S. air traffic control system, A4A's Chief Executive Nicholas Calio said in a news release.

Delta said in a statement, "The US$5 million that Delta pays in annual dues to A4A can be better used to invest in employees and products to further enhance the Delta experience, and to support what we believe is a more efficient way of communicating in Washington."

Disagreements among airlines have rarely resulted in a trade-group split by a player as large as Delta, the third-biggest U.S. airline by capacity, according to industry consultant Robert Mann.

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"It means a change in A4A's budget. They'll have to do a little more with less," Mann said.

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