

Reno airport files complaint against U.S. Customs

By Jane Kane, Reno Gazette-Journal

Officials with the Reno-Tahoe International Airport are decrying the treatment of a 15-year-old girl by U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents at the airport when she flew to Reno from Guadalajara, Mexico in November and was allegedly detained, questioned for five hours and unable to contact family.

On Monday, Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority board chairman Andy Wirth and Marily Mora, the president and CEO of the airport, said they filed a formal complaint on Dec. 16 against the federal agency. Both Wirth and Mora said they have been hearing from the local Hispanic community since this summer about alleged mistreatment by federal border protection agents at the airport, which added the direct flight to Mexico about a year ago.

"She was coming to visit her family for the holidays and was treated in a way that should not be tolerated in our airport, our community or in our country," Wirth said of the 15-year-old girl, whose identity is being withheld by the airport because she is a minor. "The treatment she received was appalling on every level and deeply disconcerting."

Frank Falcon, a spokesman for Customs and Border Protection in San Francisco, said he had not heard of the situation in Reno until a reporter called him on Monday.

Airport officials noted that they have been receiving complaints of the customs process in Reno since late summer this year.

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