

THE NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL

February 29, 2024

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The New England Council, I would like to request that you support passage of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act, (S. 1939) when this legislation is debated and brought to a vote in the U.S. Senate. Passed out of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee on February 8th, this bipartisan bill will go a long way toward ensuring that the programs and policies of the FAA not only continue without disruption, but that key new provisions will be able to enhance our critical transportation network to the benefit of all those who rely upon it.

As you are aware, our commercial aviation system was one of the most severely impacted elements of the national economy during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the nation's aviation sector is finally recovering to pre-pandemic levels and poised for further growth. In that time, there have been some "fits and starts" that have impacted airlines and airports, passengers and workers, and many other related industries and communities. With that experience, much has been learned about how we should move forward toward renewing existing aviation law, what new protections should be added, and what existing methods should be reconsidered.

As passed by the Commerce Committee, the \$107 billion five-year bill will provide \$20 billion for airport improvement grants (AIP); \$18.2 billion over five years for facilities and equipment; a total of roughly \$67.5 billion over five years for FAA operations; and \$1.8 billion for research and development dedicated towards aerospace technology. Further, the bill authorizes annual funding for the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to help in the agency's efforts to improve the welfare of the traveling public. The Committee identified major benefits of this bill, particularly that it "increases FAA safety inspectors, air traffic controllers, [and] FAA oversight of foreign repair stations" while it "requires FAA safety technology deployment to prevent near-misses, 25-hour cockpit voice recorders, [and] investigations of service difficulty reports." The Committee leaders also pointed out that the bill "sets refund standards for non-refundable tickets, protects vouchers for five years, prohibits fees for family seating, [and] triples fines for airline consumer violations."

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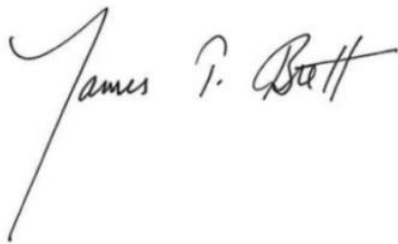
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The individuals who drafted the legislation that will soon be considered by the U.S. Senate – Commerce Committee Chairwoman Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Ranking Member Ted Cruz (R-TX), Aviation Subcommittee Chairwoman Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Ranking Member Jerry Moran (R-KS) – have given careful consideration to the vast range of issues that are top of mind to the traveling public and the entire aviation industry and concomitant businesses. Add to that, the members of the Commerce Committee provided their unanimous support to report this bill to the floor of the Senate. They have pieced together a thoughtful, bipartisan bill that should enjoy the support of a majority of senators.

We can all take heart that the aviation industry is well on its way to not just fully rebounding from the pandemic but moving beyond. Renewing and upgrading the law that governs this important industry will help ensure that this recovery is complete. We urge passage of this bipartisan legislation – the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act – for the benefit of businesses and residents across New England and our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James T. Brett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

James T. Brett
President & CEO

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