



June 8, 2016

The Honorable Bill Shuster  
Chairman  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2268 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2134 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank LoBiondo  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Aviation  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2427 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Aviation  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2113 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Shuster and LoBiondo and Ranking Members DeFazio and Larsen:

Given the significant increases in air passengers evident at screening checkpoints across the country and the imperative that exists to build the infrastructure necessary to accommodate current demand and future growth, we are writing to urge immediate action on long-term Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) authorization legislation that prioritizes airport investment.

With the July 15 deadline for the expiration of FAA programs and ticket taxes quickly approaching, we are growing increasingly concerned that Congress will opt for a series of short-term extensions as it has done repeatedly in the past. This approach is unacceptable and would be very disruptive to both the FAA and airports across the country trying to move forward with crucial, and much needed infrastructure projects.

As you recall, the previous long-term FAA reauthorization bill took Congress four-and-a-half years to complete and required 23 separate, short-term extensions. Those numerous stop-gap measures, coupled with a partial FAA shutdown, were incredibly disruptive to airport operators who routinely saw their Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants delayed because of prolonged uncertainty in Washington.

We simply cannot afford to go through another tumultuous process this time around. Repeated short-term extensions and FAA shutdowns make it exceptionally challenging for airport operators to plan and complete their capital projects. Funding uncertainty is particularly hard on smaller airports and those in the northern part of the country that operate with short construction seasons.

Rather than simply kicking the proverbial can down the road, we urge you to approve a comprehensive, FAA reauthorization bill that provides for enhanced investment in airports through an increase in the outdated and arbitrary federal cap on local Passenger Facility Charges and a more robust AIP. Further, we ask that you act on the other airport policy and funding priorities our groups have steadfastly advocated for during congressional consideration of FAA reauthorization legislation.

If Congress is unable to pass a comprehensive FAA reauthorization bill by the current July 15 deadline, we ask that you pass a long-term extension through at least the end of September 2017. We further ask that any extension provide federal funding for AIP in fiscal year 2017 at levels envisioned by the House and Senate in their pending reauthorization measures. Airports require a long planning horizon and predictable funding in order to move forward with infrastructure projects that enhance safety, increase capacity, and reduce delays.

Passing a single, long-term extension would not prevent Congress from sending an FAA reauthorization bill to the President's desk later this year or early next year. But a long-term extension would provide airports with much-needed predictability and ensure that they are not subject to the vagaries of frequent, disruptive short-term extensions.

Again, the experiences encountered by travelers this spring are further evidence of the need for Congress to act immediately to give airports the tools they need to fund important projects to enhance capacity, safety, and efficiency. We believe these actions should be taken as part of a comprehensive FAA bill, if possible, or as part of a long-term extension through fiscal year 2017 if necessary.

Sincerely,



Todd Hauptli  
President & CEO  
AAAE



Kevin M. Burke  
President & CEO  
ACI-NA



Roger J. Dow  
President & CEO  
U.S. Travel Association