



November 29, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation-HUD
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation-HUD
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Collins, and Ranking Member Reed:

On behalf of airport operators, airport executives, and general aviation pilots around the country, we are writing to urge you retain provisions in S. 1655, the Fiscal Year 2018 Transportation-HUD Appropriations Bill, that would dramatically improve aviation infrastructure across the country by modernizing the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) and increasing funding for the Airport Improvement Program (AIP). In tandem these policy proposals would ensure commercial service and general aviation airports have the resources they need to repair aging facilities, enhance aviation safety, and build necessary infrastructure.

Commercial service, general aviation, and reliever airports have enormous capital needs and limited ways to pay for a growing list of necessary infrastructure projects. According to the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems, airports have \$32.5 billion in AIP-eligible projects over the next five years – or \$6.5 billion annually. In recent years, though, airports have only received half that amount in annual AIP grants. It is important to note that AIP funds come from users of the aviation system – not the taxpayer-supported general fund.

Furthermore, the latest Airport Infrastructure Needs Survey from Airports Council International—North America estimates that commercial service and general aviation airports have \$100 billion in capital needs between 2017 and 2021 – approximately \$20 billion annually

for both AIP-eligible, PFC-eligible, and other necessary projects. That is three times the \$6.4 billion that airports are expected to receive in AIP funds and local PFC user fees this year. Clearly airports of all sizes need additional resources to close the enormous infrastructure funding gap facing the aviation industry.

ACI-NA, AAAE, and AOPA agree with the Senate's approach of providing all airports with the resources they need for infrastructure projects while ensuring that smaller airports in rural America are not left behind. Together, our three aviation organizations support the comprehensive plan in the Senate bill to improve our nation's entire airport ecosystem, help the economy by supporting good-paying jobs, and turn infrastructure decision-making authority to local communities where it rightly belongs.

Specifically, the Senate proposal would recalibrate AIP to focus limited federal dollars on the smaller commercial service and general aviation airports that rely on AIP grants the most. Thus, larger airports would forego AIP entitlement funds in exchange for additional local flexibility, leaving those resources – which are significant – to flow through the Small Airport Fund and provide additional AIP grants for small commercial service and general aviation airports.

We appreciate the attention to the infrastructure needs of America's airports given in the Senate bill, and we urge you to include these essential provisions on airport infrastructure in the final appropriations package. Modernizing the PFC and bolstering AIP would work together to ensure that commercial service, general aviation, and reliever airports have the resources they need to build critical infrastructure projects, improve aviation safety, preserve access to rural America, and support much-needed jobs.

Sincerely,



Mark Baker
President and CEO
AOPA



Todd Hauptli
President and CEO
AAAE



Kevin Burke
President and CEO
ACI-NA