



March 18, 2024

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Chair  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Chair  
Committee on Transportation &  
Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation &  
Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Cantwell and Cruz and Representatives Graves and Larsen:

Thank you for your diligent efforts to advance legislation to reauthorize Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) programs and funding. On behalf of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) – the business voice of the engineering industry – I am writing to reiterate our priorities as you negotiate a final compromise bill.

As I wrote to you last year at the start of the reauthorization process, ACEC is focused on aviation and airport infrastructure policies that enhance safety, ensure environmental protection and remediation, facilitate economic development, and meet the growing needs of the traveling public. Both the House and Senate versions of the FAA reauthorization go very far in addressing these priorities, and we commend you for your attention to our views.

#### Airport Infrastructure Investment

Our top priority is designing 21<sup>st</sup> century aviation infrastructure that supports the safe and reliable movement of people and goods. We strongly support the substantial increases in authorized annual funding for the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) included in both the House and Senate bills. We applaud your recognition and attention to this long overdue increase in core airport investment.

We also support the expansion of AIP eligibility for terminal improvement projects, particularly the provisions authorized in the House bill. With passenger travel returning to pre-pandemic levels, now is the time to build on the grants begun in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to relieve congestion, improve safety, and enhance the passenger experience. These vital community projects will promote economic growth in and around airport facilities.

ACEC appreciates inclusion of provisions to allow for the voluntary use of alternative project delivery methods such as Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) in both the House and Senate bills. IPD can help deliver complex airport projects using a multi-party, single-contract approach. The

provisions included in both bills can enhance coordination and collaboration between agency clients, designers, builders, and labor partners to achieve on-time and on-budget delivery of complex projects.

#### Unmanned Aircraft Systems

We support the measures in both House and Senate bills to continue the development of a comprehensive system for safely integrating Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) and advanced air mobility (AAM) aircraft into the national airspace. Engineering firms utilize UAS for a wide array of services, including surveying, construction site monitoring, facility inspections, and wetlands mapping. Much more will be possible as the FAA implements the measures outlined in your bills.

Specifically, ACEC supports provisions to enable beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations, including a directive to complete a rulemaking by a date certain and guidance for commercial BVLOS waivers in the interim. The final reauthorization bill should also provide FAA with the programmatic resources necessary to facilitate UAS and AAM integration.

#### Environmental Protection and Resilience

Engineering firms advise their airport clients through a wholistic planning process on methods for improving sustainability and environmental stewardship. ACEC supports the amendment added to the Senate committee bill to provide additional dedicated funding specifically for resilience planning. These grants will help equip airports to bolster their facilities against natural and manmade hazards.

Finally, we encourage you to retain the Senate provisions to assist airports in the cleanup and remediation of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). As you know, many airports face significant challenges in dealing with these chemicals, the disposal of fire-fighting foam and equipment, and the transition to alternatives. The final FAA bill should provide funds to assist in this important environmental cleanup effort.

We look forward to working with you, your colleagues, and staff to include these important initiatives as you finalize the FAA reauthorization bill. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Linda Bauer Darr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Linda" being the most prominent.

Linda Bauer Darr  
President & CEO