Statement of

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Chairman LoBiondo, Ranking Member Larsen, and members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation, thank you for inviting me to participate in this hearing on the "State of American Aviation." It is an honor for me to be here.

My name is Mark Brewer. I am the Airport Director of the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport, a small hub airport located just north of Boston. I also serve as the Chair of the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE). AAAE is the world's largest professional organization representing the men and women who manage primary, commercial service, reliever, and general aviation airports.

I am also pleased to be testifying today on behalf of the Airports Council International-North America (ACI-NA). ACI-NA represents local, regional, and state governing bodies that own and operate commercial airports in the United States and Canada. ACI-NA's member airports enplane more than 95 percent of the domestic and virtually all the international airline passenger and cargo traffic in North America. AAAE and ACI-NA are working closely together in an effort to find solutions to the enormous challenges facing airports throughout the country.

I would like to begin by thanking those of you who served on this panel in the 112th Congress and helped to pass H.R. 658, the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012. After five years of debate and 23 short-term extensions, the FAA reauthorization bill provided airports with some much-needed stability. We truly appreciate all the time and hard work that members and tireless staff dedicated to getting that multi-year FAA bill enacted into law.

Impacts of Sequestration and Other Funding Cuts

Mr. Chairman, since Congress passed the FAA reauthorization bill in early 2012, airports and our colleagues in the aviation industry have been focused on the across-the-board cuts called for in sequestration. The first round of cuts that were implemented earlier this year could have resulted in the closure of a large number of FAA contract towers, furloughs for tens of thousands of controllers and other FAA employees, and massive delays in our aviation system.

Congress wisely stepped in to prevent those disruptions from happening. However, airports were forced to give up $253 million in Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding in order to maintain FAA operations. This precedent of diverting limited capital dollars to FAA operations is of great concern to airports and we would suspect to this committee, which has long been at the forefront of efforts to ensure adequate investment in the nation's airport infrastructure. Unfortunately, funding for infrastructure projects may be targeted again as the sequestration process continues.

The recent quarter of a billion dollar cut in AIP funding and the continuing downward pressure on federal spending underscore the need for Congress to raise the federal cap on local Passenger Facility Charges (PFCs) and to take additional steps that would allow airports to finance a greater share of critical infrastructure projects with local revenues.

Even if sequestration is eliminated or its impact is limited in subsequent years, it is clear that federal resources are under tremendous strain and insufficient to meet the significant infrastructure needs at airports. We are simply asking Congress to provide airports with the self-help they need to fill the gap.

Plans to Close Contract Towers: As most of you know, the Administration earlier this year initially planned to close 189 contract towers and eliminate midnight shifts at more than 60 towers in order to comply with the sequestration cuts. The proposed closure list was later reduced to 149. But closing such a large number of towers would have had an enormous impact on the safety of small airports around the country.

Airports are grateful that a large number of Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate stood up and voiced their strong opposition to the Administration's plans to close contract towers. On behalf of my colleagues at contract tower airports around the country, I would particularly like to thank Chairman Shuster for his leadership on this issue as well as Ranking Member Rahall, Chairman LoBiondo, Ranking Member Larsen, and all of you on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee who helped to protect contract towers.

Eighty-three House members -- Republicans and Democrats -- sent a letter to the Secretary of Transportation in May urging the administration to keep contract towers open. Forty-one Senators sent a similar letter to the Secretary of Transportation and the FAA Administrator. The strong bipartisan and bicameral support for contract towers reinforces just how important this program is to maintaining safety at small airports throughout the country.

Using AIP Funds to Pay for FAA Operations: In order to mitigate the impact of cuts at the FAA, Congress ultimately passed S. 853, the Reducing Flight Delays Act of 2013. The legislation kept the contract towers open and put an end to controller furloughs. However, it did so by diverting $253 million from AIP to pay for FAA operations. AAAE and ACI-NA strongly opposed plans to furlough air traffic controllers and shut down contract towers. But the two airport associations believe that keeping our aviation system running at full capacity should not be done at the expense of investing in airport infrastructure projects.

ACI-NA Interim President Deborah McElroy and AAAE President and CEO Todd Hauptli commented on how AIP cuts shortchange the future of America's airports in a joint letter that they sent to Congressional leaders in September. They pointed out that continued use of AIP funds to pay for FAA operations would undercut the ability of airports to finance infrastructure projects and remain competitive with airports in other countries:

"The use of AIP to fund FAA operations is a misguided approach that disregards the fact that passengers are paying a portion of their airline ticket taxes for airport capital improvements, in particular the safety and capacity projects necessary to keep U.S. airports' infrastructure reliable and competitive with the rest of the world," they wrote. "These funds ensure airports can make essential, long-term investments in maintaining and upgrading facilities. Using the funding that passengers pay for airport improvements to again address FAA's sequestration problem is not in the long-term interests of the U.S. aviation system."

Lawmakers who serve on the Senate Appropriations Committee seem to agree with that assessment. The report accompanying S. 1243, the Fiscal Year 2014 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, states:

"The use of AIP funds for purposes other than airport infrastructure development could have a serious impact on the ability of the Nation's airports to meet current and future FAA standards; replace or rehabilitate critical airport facilities; increase airfield capacity; enhance competition among airlines; modify, replace, or construct facilities to accommodate additional passengers and aircraft; or meet other important safety, security, and environmental requirements."

Without Congressional intervention, sequestration is slated to last through 2021. To illustrate the threat this poses to airports, if AIP funding were to be reduced at a rate of $253 million per year our members would see their AIP funding shrink by almost $2.3 billion. A cut of that magnitude would have a severe impact on the ability of airports to finance critical infrastructure projects and prepare for increasing demand.

Let me give you give you an example of how additional cuts could affect the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport. During the next five years, our airport hopes to receive at least $14.2 million in AIP discretionary funds for a variety of projects including runway and taxiway overlays and relocating a roadway so that it is outside of our Object Free Area and complies with FAA standards. These projects along with planned purchase of snow removal equipment would improve safety at our facility. However, we are concerned that additional AIP cuts could delay those infrastructure projects and equipment purchases and ultimately increase our costs.

TSA Exit Lanes: While airports are facing significant AIP cuts they are also being forced to take over new costly responsibilities currently held by the federal government. As you may already know, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is requiring some 150 airport operators to staff nearly 350 exit lanes by early 2014 -- a responsibility that the TSA has held since the agency was created. According to TSA's own estimates, shifting this responsibility to airports would cost our members more than $100 million per year.

This is a significant policy change that is being undertaken strictly for the agency's budget convenience. We would argue that it is also being done without the benefit of a comment and review process in violation of the Administrative Procedures Act. This is such a consequential issue that AAAE and ACI-NA, along with more than 20 individual airports, have requested that the Court of Appeals issue a stay, preventing TSA from taking this action. We have also been urging Congress to prohibit TSA from shifting exit lane responsibilities to airport operators or at a minimum comply with the Administrative Procedures Act and issue a notice of proposed rulemaking for public comment in order to promulgate the requirement.

TSA's plans would impact airports and our airline partners. AAAE and ACI-NA have been working with our colleagues at Airlines For America (A4A) and the Regional Airline Association (RAA) in an effort to prevent the TSA from implementing this costly plan. I would like to thank Mr. Calio, his team at A4A, and the RAA for all their help on this matter.

Airports Face Significant Capital Needs as Demand and Congestion Increase

Mr. Chairman, at a time when federal funds for airport infrastructure projects are receding, airports are trying to prepare for increasing demand, increasing congestion, and increasing capital needs. Before I get into a few specific airport proposals, I would like to take some time to describe rising demand and congestion and explain why airports need to begin preparing now for increasing passenger levels to come.

Increasing Demand: The FAA estimates that commercial carriers in the United States will carry approximately 737 million passengers this year. The agency's latest Aerospace Forecast indicates that enplanements are expected to increase by about 3 percent next year to 757 million passengers. That is a slight uptick in the short-term. However, passenger levels are expected to jump by approximately 56 percent over the next 20 years.

The FAA indicates that passenger enplanements are expected to reach the one billion mark by 2027. Two years later, passenger levels are expected to rise to 1.1 billion -- an increase of almost 320 million above current levels. Adding 320 million passengers is the equivalent of adding the entire population of the U.S. to our already constrained aviation system. Sixteen years may seem like a long time to some. However, planning and building runways and other capacity-enhancing projects can take an enormous amount of time.

Mark Reis, the Managing Director at the Seattle-Tacoma (SEA-TAC) International Airport and ACI-NA Chair, knows firsthand how long it can take an airport to build a new runway. SEA-TAC, the 15th busiest airport in the country, finally opened a new runway in 2008. But my ACI-

NA counterpart and partner can tell you how that project took almost 20 years to complete due, in part, to a lengthy environmental review process.

Runways often take 10 to 15 years or more to complete. Airports simply don't have the luxury of being able to flip a switch and instantly complete a new runway or some other large capacity project. Airports need to begin preparing now for the inevitable influx of passengers to come. And it will be increasingly difficult for airports to fund those projects if AIP funding continues to be reduced and the PFC cap remains stalled at $4.50 as it has been since 2000.

Increasing Congestion: Without adequate airport infrastructure investment, increasing demand can translate into increasing congestion. The U.S. Travel Association recently released a report that vividly describes how increasing passenger levels and reduced capacity will impact passengers. The "Thanksgiving in the Skies" report makes the point that passengers will experience Thanksgiving-like congestion at most large airports at least one day a week within the next ten years.

According to the study, one in five major airports in the United States already experiences passenger levels equal to the Wednesday before Thanksgiving at least one day a week. Within the next five years, 24 of the top 30 airports will experience those Thanksgiving-like passenger levels at least one day a week. The U.S. Travel Association predicts that ten years from now 25 of the top 30 airports will experience Thanksgiving-like congestion two days a week.

Significant Airport Capital Needs: Airports also face significant capital needs. As part of its 2013 National Plan of Integrated Airports System (NPIAS), the FAA estimates that there will be $42.5 billion in AIP-eligible projects between 2013 and 2017 or approximately $8.5 billion per year. The annual average is more than twice the $3.1 billion that airports received in AIP funds in Fiscal Year 2013.

The FAA's NPIAS provides a good snapshot of certain airport capital needs. However, it is important to note that the report only addresses those projects that are eligible for federal funds. It does not include other necessary but ineligible infrastructure projects such as revenue-producing areas of terminal buildings that airports fund with PFCs, bonds, and other revenue sources.

Like the FAA, ACI-NA has a long track record of evaluating airport capital needs. The association's 2013 Capital Needs Survey estimates that airports will have $71.3 billion in capital needs over the next five years or $14.3 billion annually for AIP-eligible projects and other necessary projects that are not eligible for federal funds. This is far more than the $5.9 billion that airports expect to receive in AIP funds and PFC revenue in 2013.

"Airport operators have a responsibility to make needed investments in modernizing aging airport facilities so that they can ensure efficient, safe and secure operations for the traveling public and other aeronautical users," ACI-NA's latest report correctly states. "Without adequate investment, the ability of airports to fully serve the public and the community as a growth engine is diminished."

Recommendations for Financing Airport Infrastructure Projects

Airports rely mostly on PFC revenue, AIP funds, and bonds to finance infrastructure projects at their facilities. Ensuring that airports have adequate infrastructure funding will require Congress to take action on all three accounts. But continuing to reduce or maintain current AIP levels increases the need for Congress to allow airports to finance a greater share of their infrastructure projects with local revenues instead.

Raise Federal Cap on Local PFCs: AAAE, ACI-NA, and a number of large hub airports that participate in the Gateway Airports Council are urging Congress to raise the federal cap on local PFCs from $4.50 to $8.50 and to allow for the periodic adjustment of the cap for inflation.

Considering the ongoing pressure to reduce federal spending and that across-the-board cuts called for in sequestration may last through 2021, it is now more important than ever that Congress raise the federal cap on local PFCs. The PFC cap has not been raised since 2000, and it's time for Congress to revisit this issue and provide airports with the self-help they need to finance critical infrastructure projects.

The recent $253 million cut in AIP funding and the possibility that the program may be targeted again underscore the need for Congress to raise the federal cap on local PFCs. At a time when there is enormous pressure to reduce discretionary spending, raising the PFC cap would provide airports with the self-help they need to finance critical infrastructure projects without relying as much on scarce federal funds.

For more than 20 years the PFC program has helped airports increase safety, security, and capacity, reduce aircraft noise, and increase competition. Money generated from PFCs augments AIP funding and other sources of revenue that airports use for a variety of purposes including building new runways, taxiways and terminals. The FAA estimates that airports will collect about $2.8 billion from PFCs this year.

A PFC increase would help large and small airports pay for critical infrastructure projects and debt service on bonds they issue to finance projects at their facilities. For instance, the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport could use the additional PFC revenue to make additional payments on its existing debt service on PFC projects. By using PFC revenue for that purpose we could reduce the debt load on airline rates and charges. This is yet another example of where airports *and* airlines would truly benefit from a PFC increase.

Airport efforts to prepare for higher passenger levels that I mentioned earlier have been hampered by rising construction costs. According to the Means Construction Cost Indexes, the average construction costs for 30 major U.S. cities jumped more than 65 percent since 2000 – the last time Congress raised the PFC cap. Despite a slight reprieve in 2009, construction costs are continuing to rise.

Unfortunately, rising construction costs have eroded the purchasing power of PFCs and AIP funds. For instance, a $4.50 PFC is only worth less than $2.50 today. Unless corrective action is taken, the value of PFCs will erode even more by the time the current FAA reauthorization bill expires in 2015.

In order to keep up with construction inflation, it would be necessary to raise the PFC cap to more than $8.50 today. Keep in mind that raising the cap to that level would only allow PFCs to keep up with construction cost inflation. To prevent further erosion of the value of PFCs, the cap would need to be adjusted periodically.

I would like to stress that PFCs are not taxes. PFCs are local user fees charged to passengers using airport facilities to help defray the costs of building airport infrastructure. Moreover, PFCs are imposed by states or units of local government – not the federal government. PFCs are not collected by the federal government, not spent by the federal government, and not deposited into the U.S. Treasury.

Moreover, the current PFC collection process works well. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) considered other possible PFC collection methods. However, the agency concluded that none of the alternatives it examined are better than the current collection method. In fact, the GAO found that the other alternatives, "would diminish the passenger experience by adding another step in the payment or check-in process, reduce customer transparency and entail higher administrative costs."

Protect AIP Funds: AAAE and ACI-NA are urging Congress protect AIP funding from additional cuts in the sequestration process and to maintain adequate funding for airport infrastructure projects in the next FAA reauthorization bill. It is important to point out that no general fund revenues are used for AIP grants. The AIP program is supported entirely by users of the aviation system through various taxes and fees that are deposited into the Airport and Airway Trust Fund.

AIP is an important source of funding for all sizes of airports and especially smaller airports around the country that don't generate as much PFC revenue or have access to the bond market. However, AIP is not just for small airports. Large and medium hub airports also depend on AIP funding -- particularly money distributed through the Letter of Intent Program -- to help pay for large capacity-enhancing projects.

Even before the first round of sequestration, federal funding for airport projects has been held stagnant and has not been nearly enough to cover all eligible projects or to keep up with inflation. As members of this committee know, the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 authorized $3.35 billion for AIP annually -- down from the $3.515 billion that Congress appropriated for AIP in Fiscal Year 2011. As I mentioned earlier, airports received approximately $3.1 billion in Fiscal Year 2013 after the diversion of $253 million to operations.

Preserve and Restore Tax Exempt Financing for Airport Bonds: I know that this isn't under the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's direct jurisdiction, but AAAE and ACI-NA urge you to work with your colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee to help finance infrastructure project with bonds. Specifically, we are urging Congress to retain the tax exemption for municipal bonds and to eliminate the tax burden of the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) on airport private activity bonds.

Airports frequently turn to the capital markets to finance long-term construction projects. Bond proceeds are the largest source of funds for airport capital needs, accounting for approximately 54 percent of the total funds available to airports historically. This is a particularly important source of revenue for large hub airports.

AAAE and ACI-NA have long argued that federal tax law unfairly classifies the vast majority of bonds that airports use as private activity even though they are used to finance runways, taxiways and other facilities that benefit the public. Since private activity bonds are subject to the AMT, airport bond issuers traditionally have been charged higher interest rates on their borrowing.

A permanent AMT fix would help airports save more, allow them to invest in more infrastructure projects and support jobs. Moreover, it would reflect the fact that airports use private activity bonds on projects that benefit the traveling public and should not be subject to the AMT in the first place.

Impact of Airline Fees on the Trust Fund: Airport operators have an enormous amount of respect for our airline partners and the highly competitive nature of the commercial airline industry. However, at a time when federal funding for airport infrastructure project is declining, and the purchasing power of PFCs is eroding, the airlines' current business model simultaneously reduces funds available for airport infrastructure projects and air traffic control modernization.

Air carriers are increasingly relying on revenue generated from checked baggage fees and other ancillary charges and less on funds from base airline tickets. Unlike airline tickets, baggage fees and some other ancillary charges are not subject to a 7.5 percent excise tax. In other words, the airlines' a la carte pricing model allows carriers to avoid paying federal taxes for services that were once included in the price of traditional airline tickets.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) recently reported that U.S. airlines collected almost $1.7 billion in baggage fees in the first half of 2013. That means the carriers are on track to collect approximately $3.5 billion in bag fees again this year like they did in 2012. Those figures are for bag fees alone and do not include revenue that the carriers generate from other ancillary charges. Notably, that figure is more than the amount made available to all airports through AIP.

The airlines’ use of ancillary fees shortchanges the Airport and Airway Trust Fund of revenue that would otherwise support airport infrastructure projects, air traffic control modernization, and other aviation system improvements. Taxing baggage fees at the same 7.5 percent would have generated more than $260 million last year -- more than enough to cover the AIP cut that airports sustained earlier this year. Since the beginning of the 2009, a 7.5 percent tax on bag fees would have generated more than $1 billion.

The airlines' reliance on untaxed baggage fees and the negative impact on the Airport and Airway Trust Fund has been a growing trend in recent years and is expected to continue to increase in the years ahead. According to DOT, the percentage of airline revenue from base ticket sales has dropped from 87.6 percent in 1990 to slightly more than 70 percent in 2012. Other independent research backs up DOT's findings about this growing trend. For instance, the IdeaWorksCompany recently released a report indicating that seven major carriers in the United States are expected to generate $14.3 billion in ancillary fee revenue this year.

We truly appreciate the airlines' responsibility to answer to their shareholders. And considering the symbiotic relationship between airlines and airports, our members stand to benefit when our airline partners are successful. But it is important to acknowledge that the ancillary fee loophole is having a negative impact on the amount of money that goes into the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, which in turn provides money for AIP and NextGen, and helps the nation meet the long-term needs of our aviation system.

Recommendations for Helping Small Communities

Mr. Chairman, the FAA reauthorization bill that Congress passed last year reaffirmed federal support for programs that help small communities maintain and attract commercial air service. We appreciate your support for key small community programs and urge you to continue that support during the next FAA reauthorization. Modest investment in these programs is particularly critical at a time when the airline industry is continuing to consolidate.

Preserve FAA's Contract Tower Program: The FAA's Contract Tower Program garnered a great deal of attention earlier this year when the Administration initially proposed to close 189 contract towers because of budget cuts called for in sequestration. Thankfully, members of this committee and numerous other lawmakers in the House and Senate intervened and prevented the shutdown from happening.

Again, I would like to thank all of you helped earlier this year to keep contract towers open. I would also like to thank this committee for providing funding for the cost share program in the last FAA reauthorization bill and for implementing a number of program changes that are helping contract towers around the country. Airports deeply appreciate your support for this critical program.

The FAA's Contract Tower Program has been in place since 1982 and currently provides for the efficient and cost-effective operation of air traffic control towers at 252 smaller airports in 46 states and 4 territories. Sixteen airports currently participate in the cost share program. Although contract towers are located at small airports throughout the country, they handle 28 percent of all tower operations in the United States.

Maintaining the Contract Tower Program is critical to ensuring that small communities continue to have safe air service. Controllers at contract towers separate aircraft; issue safety and weather alerts; assist with military, emergency response and medical flights; and perform other functions that enhance safety. Needless to say, if contract towers are closed, controllers no longer perform those functions -- a fact that could reduce safety and create significant local economic impacts.

The Contract Tower Program continues to be one of FAA's most successful and cost effective industry partnerships. In an audit released late last year, the DOT Inspector General concluded that contract towers "continue to provide cost-effective and safe air traffic services...." The report pointed out that "the Program has been successful in providing low-cost air traffic control services at airports that otherwise would not have received these services, increasing the level of safety at these airports for pilots and the surrounding local communities."

With strong support from members of this committee, we were able to avoid dramatic cuts in the first round of sequestration. However, contract towers may very well be targeted for closure again as the sequestration process continues. We look forward to continuing to work with you to keep contract towers open and to explore ways to improve the program when you consider the next FAA reauthorization bill.

Maintain Essential Air Service Program: We also urge Congress to support the modified Essential Air Service (EAS) program. The EAS program allows people who live in rural and less populated areas to have access to our national aviation system. Commercial air service is not just a matter of convenience. It is also critical to economic development efforts in communities around the country. Without commercial air service made possible by the EAS program, it would be difficult for many small communities to retain and attract businesses that support jobs.

As members of this committee already know, the EAS program received a great deal of scrutiny during consideration of the last FAA reauthorization bill. The final legislation included a total of $193 million per year for the program through Fiscal Year 2015. However, it calls for the program to rely increasingly on revenues generated from overflight fees and less on money from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund.

The final FAA bill also ushered in a number of EAS reforms and restrictions. For instance, it preserved a provision that eliminates service to communities with more than $1,000 per passenger subsidy -- a proposal that Congress approved as part of a previous short-term extension. It also eliminated service to communities with fewer than 10 enplanements a day except for the communities that are more than 175 miles from a large or medium hub airport and those locations in Alaska and Hawaii.

With the new funding mechanisms and reforms in place, we hope that the contentious debate surrounding the EAS program is behind us. On behalf of small communities around the country, we urge Congress to support the modified EAS program when you consider the next FAA reauthorization bill.

Economic Impact of Airports

Mr. Chairman, investing in airport infrastructure projects and small community programs improves aviation safety and capacity and ensure that people who live in less populated areas have access to our aviation system. But investing in airports also has profound impact on our economy.

ACI-NA Study: Our colleagues at ACI-NA released a study last year that describes the enormous impact that airports have on our economy. The association points out that "when you consider direct employment, 'Airports, Inc.' is the nation's largest employer, after Wal-Mart."

The *Economic Impact of Commercial Airports* concluded that more than 1.2 million jobs are located at 490 commercial airports and that visitors supported another 3.6 million jobs. It also found that the direct economic output from airports topped $227 million and that visitors spend more than $217 million annually.

When you factor in the total economic impact, commercial airports support 10.5 million jobs including those on the airport, those related to capital improvements, and those supported by the spending of visitors. According to the report, the overall economic impact includes an annual payroll of $365 billion and produced an annual output of $1.2 trillion.

"These economic impacts are a significant contributor to the national economy," the report stated. "Not only do these airports provide vital transportation links that permit the rapid, efficient, and cost-effective movement of people, goods and services, they account for more than 8 percent of the national GDP and support more than 7 percent of the country's work force."

Infrastructure Funding Gap: There is also a price to pay if we don't invest in needed airport infrastructure projects. The American Society of Civil Engineers earlier this year released a report indicating that the infrastructure funding gap in the United States is expected to exceed $1 trillion by 2020. The paper also describes how deteriorating infrastructure negatively impacts the economy.

The ASCE report entitled, *A Failure to Act*, suggests that overall infrastructure needs will exceed $2.7 trillion by 2020. However, expected investment levels will be slightly more than $1.6 trillion – a projected $1.1 trillion deficit. According to the report, the funding gap could widen to $4.7 trillion by 2040.

The report points out that, “Declining airport and marine port infrastructure directly impacts the nation’s ability to import and export goods efficiently, driving up costs to U.S. consumers.” It goes on to say that the airport infrastructure funding gap would cost the gross domestic product approximately $313 billion by 2020 and lead to 350,000 fewer jobs.

Conclusion

Chairman LoBiondo, Ranking Member Larsen, and members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation, thank you again for inviting me to participate in this hearing on the state of American aviation. I know I speak on behalf of AAAE and ACI-NA when I say airport operators look forward to working with you as the sequestration debate continues and as you begin preparing for the next FAA bill.