

Congressman Pete Aguilar (CA-33)
Written Testimony
House Committee of Transportation and Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Aviation
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure 2023 Member Day Hearing
Tuesday, April 18, 2023

I want to thank Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen for holding this Transportation and Infrastructure Member Day hearing and allowing me to speak about some of my priorities as the committee works on a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization bill.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Supportive Services Program

First, I urge the committee to include my bill, the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Supportive Services Expansion Act, in its FAA Reauthorization bill. This bill will create a DBE Supportive Services program under the FAA to help states provide training, assistance and services to minority, disadvantaged and women business enterprises. The program would be modeled after the DBE Supportive Services program under the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Expanding this program under the FAA through FAA reauthorization will help DBEs facilitate these firms' development into viable, self-sufficient organizations capable of competing for, and performing on federally assisted aviation projects.

Airport Improvement Program

Furthermore, airports are a critical part of our nation's infrastructure and economy, but the primary funding mechanisms for their maintenance and modernization do not meet their current needs. Creating sustainable funding streams for airport infrastructure projects must be a priority in this FAA Reauthorization.

In speaking with airports in my district and across the Inland Empire, a top priority for FAA Reauthorization is to increase the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding level from \$3.35 billion to \$4 billion. This authorization level has remained the same for almost two decades, despite the increased needs for airports to update their infrastructure and the increase in infrastructure projects overall following the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

Additionally, AIP is one of the largest federal funding mechanisms for airports, but the programmatic restrictions make a variety of capital development projects ineligible. To address this, the BIL included provisions that enhanced AIP eligibility to give airports more flexibility on how to use those funds. This brought AIP more in line with requirements for the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) program, which allows airports to use funds for FAA-approved projects that improve the safety, security and capacity of airports. For these reasons, I urge the Committee to expand AIP eligibility in FAA reauthorization to allow airports to tackle big projects without additional PFC funds.

I want to close by once again thanking the Members of this Committee for working on FAA Reauthorization this year. I look forward to continuing my work with each of you as you develop this bill.