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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE, VICE CHAIR
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

April 18, 2023

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chair
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Graves and Ranking Member Larsen,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on and share my priorities for the upcoming Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization package. As you craft this legislation, we have a unique opportunity to support and accelerate decarbonization efforts across the aviation industry, which is exactly what my bill, the Transportation Innovation Coordination Act, would do.

In the bipartisan infrastructure law, Congress created the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation (“Joint Office”) and charged it with implementing the National Electric Vehicle Charging program and other programs that support zero-emission fueling infrastructure, and zero-emission transit and school buses. Stakeholders who have worked with the Joint Office have found it to be an incredible resource, providing technical assistance, coordinating relevant grant programs, and more. Stakeholders across the transportation sector are eager for similar support and coordination across their respective modes, calling for expansion of the Joint Office’s mandate to include other modes and types of fuels beyond passenger electric vehicles.

My bill would expand the Joint Office’s mandate to include the decarbonization of aircraft and airports, maritime vessels and seaports, and medium- and heavy-duty transportation. I worked with a broad coalition of stakeholders in crafting this legislation who are supportive of expanding the authorization of the Joint Office, including state agencies like the Washington State Department of Commerce and innovative aviation companies like ZeroAvia.

On March 29, 2023, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee held a hearing on Advancing Next Generation Aviation Technologies, where ZeroAvia testified. ZeroAvia is a U.S. company with a Washington state presence that is building zero-emission, hydrogen-electric aircraft propulsion systems for aircraft. In their testimony, ZeroAvia highlighted the need for better coordination between DOE and DOT in certifying these new emerging technologies and expressed support for expanding the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation’s to include sustainable aviation.¹ This expansion is a key component of my Transportation Innovation Coordination Act and would help ensure the U.S. continues to lead when it comes to innovative and sustainable aviation.

Earlier, this year, I had the opportunity to visit the Arlington Airport in my district and see firsthand the work that innovative aviation companies like Eviation, a battery-powered aircraft manufacturer, are doing and how they and others can benefit from greater cross-agency

collaboration and coordination. In addition, as Washington's aviation industry continues to grow, with Snohomish County also recently announcing a partnership with Washington State University (WSU) to establish a Research & Development Center focused on Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) at Paine Field Airport, expansion of the Joint Office is an important step to supporting the sustainable aviation ecosystem in my region.ⁱⁱ

Washington state is a leader in clean energy and our industries are leading the way in decarbonization across other modes as well. For example, the Port of Seattle is exploring the creation of the first green cruise corridor to Alaska and the Northwest Seaport Alliance is partnering with the Republic of Korea to study creation of a green shipping corridor.^{iii,iv} PACCAR, one of the largest manufacturers of medium- and heavy-duty trucks in the world and headquartered in my district in Bellevue, WA, is investing in zero-emission commercial vehicles through the development of battery and fuel cell electric vehicles. These are just a few examples of stakeholders in my state who stand to see immense benefit from greater coordination between the federal agencies with jurisdiction over decarbonization, which is why I respectfully request you include the Transportation Innovation Coordination Act in the FAA reauthorization package.

The administration has also made decarbonizing the transportation sector, which is currently responsible for one-third of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, a top priority by releasing the "U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization: A Joint Strategy to Transform Transportation" earlier this year.^v Expanding the authorization of the Joint Office would create a natural coordinating body to carry forward implementation of this blueprint. Furthermore, as the administration moves to decarbonize the trucking industry through new emissions standards, the provisions included in my legislation around supporting decarbonization of medium- and heavy-duty transport will help ensure the federal government is providing the appropriate resources, guideposts, and tools to help the industry transition to a cleaner fleet.

This bill is endorsed by the Truck & Engine Manufacturers Association and the Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Energy Association. I have included a copy of this legislation as an attachment to my written testimony. In addition, I have provided a letter of support from stakeholders in the aviation industry for expanding the scope of the Joint Office.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share my priorities for the FAA reauthorization package with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Please contact Shanta Katipamula (shanta.katipamula@mail.house.gov) on my staff for any additional information the Committee requires about the items discussed above.

Sincerely,



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress

ⁱ <https://www.commerce.senate.gov/services/files/7AEBB76C-C190-4C46-86B2-446B22A5ACD0>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/6286/SAF-RD-Center>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.portseattle.org/projects/exploring-green-corridor-cruise-pacific-northwest-alaska>

^{iv} <https://www.nwseaportalliance.com/newsroom/northwest-seaport-alliance-announces-partnership-busan-port-authority-further>

^v <https://www.energy.gov/eere/us-national-blueprint-transportation-decarbonization-joint-strategy-transform-transportation>