

FAA Reauthorization Testimony

April 14, 2023

- Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. It is good to be back in the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to discuss the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization and transportation needs of the Inland Empire.
- I represent California's 35th Congressional District that includes Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties.
- The Ontario International Airport (ONT) and Chino Airport are in my district, and ONT is one of the top air cargo airports of the United States.
- I travel often from Washington, D.C. to Ontario International Airport since that is the most accessible airport in my region for domestic and international travel.
- As I mentioned, Ontario International Airport is a top air cargo airport and to support them I would like to work closely with the FAA to conduct a pilot program and study of the resources and tools most effective for FAA to support airports that are recognized as Inland Ports

or are transitioning to be Inland Ports. I believe funding for airports that are transitioning to becoming Inland Ports is important, as they are crucial to having a successful and sustainable supply chain.

- To support our airports, we must increase funding for the Airport Improvement Program to a minimum of \$4 billion annually.
 - This program is essential for airports to meet growing infrastructure needs as the FAA reiterated in its most recent National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems report.
- Additionally, as we support our airports, we must also invest in technology and resources that combat air pollution in economically disadvantaged communities, which causes devastating health consequences, such as asthma in children.
- Historically, the Inland Empire is ranked as having the worst air pollution in the United States.
 - In April, the American Lung Association (ALA) released its annual State of the Air Report. Once again San Bernardino and Riverside Counties ranked first and second respectively for the worst ozone pollution in the United States. The two counties also ranked in the top ten for the worst annual particle pollution nationally, according to the report.
 - As stated by the National Institute of Health, studies have shown that ultrafine particulate matter (UFP) is elevated in and around airports.

- As a center of industrial activity, coupled with unique geographic features and congestion, the area has too many air pollutants. Airports are among the largest sources of air pollution in the United States, and we must use the FAA Reauthorization as a vehicle to combat the air pollution that is affecting surrounding communities.
- Also, millions of Americans are subject to aircraft noise, and it is a constant source of consternation whether they live near an airport or under a regular flight path. Some constituents bear a significant aircraft noise burden from nearby Ontario International Airport.
 - There are already numerous complaints from residents in my community about the loud jet engine noise they are subjected to daily, even at very late or early hours of the day.
 - We must invest in sound insulation programs to reduce aircraft-related noise levels inside homes by installing sound insulated doors and windows. This would offer my constituents the ability to protect themselves and their families from aircraft noise, especially if an individual suffers from a condition that is triggered by loud noises.
- Furthermore, airlines and the aviation industry have been hit hard by a shortage of pilots and other necessary staff as well as dealing with outdated technology.

- There is a deficit of about 8,000 pilots, or 11% of the total workforce, and the shortfall could reach 30,000 pilots by 2025. There will be a projected global demand for 610,000 civil aviation Aircraft Maintenance Technicians over the next 20 years.
- In the FAA Reauthorization, we must work to address the aviation labor shortage, or the entire industry will falter. If the industry falters, consumers who rely on air travel will see more flight delays, in-flight issues, or cancellations.
- We must invest in programs, like the aviation maintenance technician development program and the aviation workforce development program, to increase the strength and number of aviation professionals who are well-trained and can be relied upon to make air travel safe and efficient.
- Additionally, as we think about our aviation workforce, we must also remember the firefighters that respond to emergencies at our local airports.
 - The FAA must collaborate with stakeholders to develop a national transition plan to assist airports in moving to fluorine-free firefighting foams.
 - Fluorine is a synthetic-based foam that contains fluorinated and hydrocarbon-based surfactants, including perfluoroalkyl or polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

- Working with this foam negatively impacts our firefighters and increases their risks of developing health issues, like cancer, if they keep handling PFAS.
- There must be funding for an acquisition program for the new foam and a disposal program for the fluorine-laced foam, and PFAS remediation at airports.
- The FAA Reauthorization is an important step in addressing air pollution, aircraft noise, aviation workforce shortages, and PFAS.
- In addition, the Inland Empire is often overlooked when it comes to transportation funding and resources.
 - As a member of the THUD Subcommittee on the House Appropriations Committee, I have worked to advance priorities that include transportation funding equity metrics.
- I would welcome the opportunity to work with your committee to continue to advance equity metrics for transportation funding, advancing the Regional Infrastructure Accelerator, fostering Thriving Communities, expanding transit-oriented development, focusing on air quality and traffic congestion, and protecting pedestrians from automobile accidents.
 - Regional Infrastructure Accelerators are important in assisting local governments in developing improved regional infrastructure priorities and financing strategies for the accelerated development of projects.

- Thriving Communities is an essential program that fosters equitable economic growth, reduces transportation cost-burden, improves public health and mobility, and increases access to economic opportunity. This investment aims to provide in-depth, hands-on technical assistance resulting in at least one community-led infrastructure project per State and territories.
- Expanding transit-oriented development will bridge the nexus of ensuring there is accessible public transit, affordable housing, and jobs in a community.
- The worst air quality in the nation is often around vulnerable communities who are suffering the impacts of climate change. As you know, airports are often important hubs for transit. We must focus on ensuring transit options in the areas of the country with the worst air quality.
- Moreover, we need to provide adequate funding to increase pedestrian safety around airports. I have a staffer that recovered from getting hit by an automobile as a pedestrian, and I know how this affects our communities. For example, in 2020 there were 6,516 pedestrians killed in traffic crashes, a 3.9-percent increase from the 6,272 pedestrian fatalities in 2019. On average, a pedestrian was injured every 10 minutes in traffic crashes in 2020. Pedestrian deaths accounted for 17 percent of all traffic fatalities and 2 percent of all people injured in

traffic crashes in 2020. This reauthorization should include language that will help our states address rising pedestrian accidents.

- Finally, the FAA can establish a direct route from DCA to ONT. This would provide a more accessible option to the residents of the Inland Empire.
- These issues are all of importance to my community and I hope to work with you to create legislation that finds solutions.
- Again, I thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony.