

Thank you, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and members of the Committee, for holding this Member Day hearing and for allowing members to share their priorities with the Committee. My testimony today lays out the priorities of Virginia's 10th Congressional District for the Committee's work on reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) this year.

Virginia's 10th Congressional District is home to a significant number of FAA assets, including three air traffic control towers at Dulles International Airport, Leesburg Executive Airport, and Manassas Regional Airport, the Potomac Terminal Radar Approach Control facility in Warrenton, the Washington Air Route Traffic Control Center in Leesburg, and the Air Traffic Control System Command Center in Warrenton. I am proud to represent each of these facilities and the thousands of FAA employees and aviation industry workers who work tirelessly to move passengers and freight safely and efficiently throughout the national airspace every day.

Perimeter Rule at Reagan National Airport

First and foremost, I urge the Committee in the strongest possible terms to avoid making any additional statutory exemptions to the current Perimeter Rule at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA). As you know, Congress must propose and approve legislation to allow "beyond perimeter" exemptions for operations between DCA and cities outside of the current 1,250-mile perimeter.

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority manages a two-airport system of DCA and Dulles International Airport (IAD) that is organized to make DCA a short-haul airport, handling non-stop flights within the existing perimeter of the airport, and IAD the airport for longer flights, as it is equipped with the infrastructure to accommodate long-distance flights and their larger aircraft. Relaxing or eroding the current perimeter historically has prompted long-distance domestic flights to shift from IAD to DCA. Each time Congress has expanded the perimeter, it has:

- (1) increased enplaning and deplaning passengers at an already overcrowded DCA;
- (2) increased noise over the densely populated areas neighboring DCA;
- (3) further strained DCA's limited facilities, including, but not limited to, baggage handling systems and claim areas, gates, ticket counters, parking, and concessions;
- (4) increased traffic on DCA's already congested roadways; and
- (5) caused the overuse of runways and other airside facilities, which can exacerbate flight delays.

Beyond the harm caused to DCA, further relaxation of the perimeter would cause smaller inside-perimeter markets to lose air service to the National Capital Region, as airlines are likely to replace those destinations with more lucrative long-haul routes currently served by IAD. Furthermore, DCA would lose many of the advantages that currently make it a popular destination for passengers because of the increased maintenance required to operate under the additional strain.

Beyond the impact to passengers, shifting long-haul flights from IAD to DCA would have the unintended consequence of impacting the regional economy. Creating an imbalance between the airports in favor of increased traffic at DCA increases the IAD cost-per-enplanement, resulting in airlines diverting more flights and passengers away from the airport. This has the potential to trigger a vicious cycle of business decline that will ripple through the National Capital Region as domestic flight destinations decrease at IAD.

Erosion of the perimeter also impacts international travel at IAD, as international airlines and passengers depend upon the convenience of domestic connections. If access to desirable domestic connecting flights

disappears, international air carriers are likely to move their IAD-based flights to airports in cities that can offer more domestic connections. A reduction of international air service to the National Capital Region risks diminishing Washington's status as a global business center and gateway destination, damaging the substantial economic growth that is directly attributable to IAD's strong development of international service.

Overall, losing the perimeter and its regulatory role is bad for the National Capital Region's economy, bad for smaller domestic air markets, and bad for international air service. Losing the perimeter would over-stress one federal asset and leave another underutilized due to shifting flights and passengers from the larger IAD, which is designed to handle them, to the smaller DCA, which isn't.

Air Traffic Controller Workforce

Additionally, as you well know, the FAA is facing significant workforce challenges, especially in terms of hiring and training new controllers to meet the nationwide demand for their services. There are 1,200 fewer fully certified controllers than there were a decade ago, and we are already seeing the effects of staffing shortages in the national airspace. These include flight delays, cancellations, and the recently published final rule "Staffing Related Relief Concerning Operations at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, John F. Kennedy International Airport, LaGuardia Airport, and Newark Liberty International Airport, May 15, 2023, Through September 15, 2023", which would reduce operations at the three named airports during the summer of 2023 and impact the airports' abilities to meet the demands of their communities and customers.

I am pleased to see that addressing these challenges is a priority of the Committee in its reauthorization work and ensuring that the FAA is using accurate staffing data to set hiring and staffing targets will be essential to doing so. I urge the Committee to include the following legislative language to incorporate the staffing targets determined by the Collaborative Resources Workgroup in the FAA's report to Congress on air traffic controller staffing:

Amend title 49 United States Code section 44506(e) by inserting in subparagraph (1) "Collaborative Resource Workgroup (CRWG)" after "The" and before "staffing standards" and by inserting "fully certified" after "of" and before "air traffic controllers needed", and inserting after subparagraph (1) a new subparagraph (2): "for each air traffic control facility operated by the FAA: the current certified professional controller staffing levels; the CRWG operational staffing targets for certified professional controllers; the anticipated certified professional controller attrition for each of the next three years; and the number of trainees." and renumber all additional subparagraphs.

Space-Based ADS-B

Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) technology provides pilots and air traffic controllers with precise, real-time air traffic surveillance data that has been proven to increase the safety and efficiency of our national airspace. The FAA is currently analyzing and evaluating enhancements to ADS-B technology including space-based ADS-B (SBA) to enable surveillance in oceanic airspace using satellite-based receivers. SBA has the potential to reduce separation in oceanic airspace, reducing flight times, fuel consumption, and emissions, as well as harmonizing standards across international airspace boundaries. SBA can also provide more accurate search and rescue operations in oceanic environments.

I urge the Committee to include the following language in FAA reauthorization legislation to encourage the FAA to develop and implement a plan to use SBA in U.S. oceanic airspace:

Sec. _____. Use of Advanced Surveillance

(a) In General.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall develop and implement a plan to—

(1) use space-based ADS-B surveillance, within United States airspace or international airspace delegated to the United States for—

(A) positive air traffic control, including separation of aircraft by implementing the ICAO Advanced Surveillance-Enhanced Procedural Separation standard;

(B) air traffic flow management;

(C) search and rescue;

(D) accident investigation; and

(E) data analytics.

(2) coordinate with counterparts at air service navigation providers in airspace that is adjacent to United States airspace or international airspace delegated to the United States to—

(A) adopt reduced separation standards in oceanic airspace;

(B) implement procedures that will permit user preferred routes to increase fuel efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and

(C) exercise leadership on setting global standards by harmonizing the safety and efficiency of air traffic operations in airspace neighboring airspace delegated to the United States.

(b) Report.—Not later than 90 days after the date the plan under subsection (a) has been completed, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that—

(1) details the actions the Administrator must take to implement the plan required under subsection (a), including defining the required technical system upgrades, operational procedure modifications, new training requirements, and the transition plan;

(2) details a schedule with milestones to use advanced surveillance systems and coordinate with international air service navigation providers under subsection (a); and,

(3) describes anticipated safety enhancements, fuel and operating cost savings and reduction in carbon emissions of aircraft operating through airspace controlled under subsection (a).

Leesburg Executive Airport

Finally, I want to share with the Committee some information regarding Leesburg Executive Airport (JYO), which is located in Virginia's 10th Congressional District, and the FAA's Remote Tower Pilot Program.

As you know, the remote tower at JYO has safely provided air traffic control services in support of over 170,000 operations since 2021. JYO, which was previously untowered, has seen significant growth since the airport began participating in the Remote Tower Pilot Program, with annual operations increasing by 47% since 2018. Unfortunately, earlier this year JYO's remote tower system was withdrawn from the FAA's System Design Approval process, and as a result the airport was informed by the FAA that remote tower services would cease on June 14, 2023.

I am concerned that the removal of air traffic control services at JYO would introduce significant safety risks to the airport given its increased traffic volume and its proximity to IAD and the Washington, DC Special Flight Rules Area. The airport and the FAA are currently working to identify an appropriate path forward to maintain air traffic control services while a more permanent solution is determined. I do not have a specific request of the Committee for FAA reauthorization legislation on this matter at this time, but I greatly appreciate the Committee's continued attention to this situation should the need arise for legislative or oversight action.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, I greatly appreciate your consideration of these priorities as you develop FAA reauthorization legislation this year.