

Prepared Testimony of the City of New Haven
Respectfully submitted to the Appropriations Committee in regard to
Tweed New Haven Regional Airport
February 9, 2009



City of New Haven
John DeStefano, Jr.
Mayor

I am writing respectfully to request \$1.5 million in operating support for Tweed New Haven Airport (see page 512, Special Transportation Fund for line item).

Tweed New Haven Airport is leased by the City of New Haven to the Tweed New Haven Airport Authority. The Authority was created by the State in 1997 in recognition of its regional standing and vital role in the economic development of Southern Connecticut. In fact, Tweed is one of just three Class I FAA-certified facilities in Connecticut and ranks 11th among all New England regional airports for total scheduled boardings. US Airways provides commercial service to Philadelphia and its 300 connecting destinations.

Even in challenging times for the airline industry, Tweed continues to move forward. As airlines are planning for service improvements, Tweed is positioning its facility to attract more flights and passenger enplanements. Over the past 10 years, the State of Connecticut and the Airport Authority have successfully implemented over \$25 million in FAA Airport Improvement Grants. Tweed is now implementing the \$10 million second phase of the Runway Safety Area project. These improvements represent a solid foundation from which to enhance the facility with new commercial service.

Tweed understands that it must be a responsible neighbor and is doing everything possible to mitigate the impact of aviation activities on the surrounding community. With that in mind, Tweed proposed "Time is Now", which calls for commercial service to three- to four- hub cities. Under "Time is Now", neighboring residents will benefit from noise attenuation systems; traffic calming and other measures. The program recently was endorsed by the South Central Regional Council of Governments and continues to gain support from residents, business and government leaders.

Transportation investments are central to economic recovery and State assistance with "Time is Now" is essential. Tweed started the fiscal year with a budget of \$2.7 million and a projected operating deficit of \$750,000. The Authority's fiscal condition is due in large part to a concerted effort to invest in the federally-mandated Runway Safety Area (RSA) improvement projects and to enhance the Airport revenue through new commercial service. However, Tweed will not be able to continue operations through next fiscal year without your support.

Respectful of the many budget pressures facing the State, I sincerely appreciate your time and consideration of this urgent matter. I truly believe Tweed is a sound public investment, which will continue to enhance the State's economic position for many years to come.

Respectfully submitted to the Appropriations Committee, February 9, 2009.

CITY OF NEW HAVEN

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NEW HAVEN IT ALL HAPPENS HERE