



Connecticut Business & Industry Association

**TESTIMONY OF ERIC J. BROWN  
ASSOCIATE COUNSEL  
CONNECTICUT BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
BEFORE THE  
COMMERCE COMMITTEE**

**FEBRUARY 16, 2010**

Good afternoon. My name is Eric Brown and I am associate counsel with the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA represents thousands of businesses of all sizes throughout Connecticut that provide hundreds of thousands of Connecticut citizens with good jobs and good benefits.

CBIA is pleased to have this opportunity to voice our support for two bills on your public hearing agenda today:

S.B. No. 107 (RAISED) AN ACT ESTABLISHING A BRADLEY DEVELOPMENT ZONE.

S.B. No. 109 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE BRADLEY BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Merriam-Webster defines “commerce” as “the exchange or buying and selling of commodities on a large scale involving transportation from place to place.”

Accordingly, it may be said that no other state-owned facility in Connecticut is of greater importance to facilitating our future participation in national and international commerce, than Bradley International Airport.

A 2005 report from the Department of Economic and Community Development estimated that over the following 20 years, on average, Bradley could contribute \$34

billion in economic activity to the state representing nearly \$11 billion in income for Connecticut residents and nearly 140,000 jobs.<sup>1</sup>

According to the most recent economic impact analysis we are aware of (2008), Bradley currently contributes \$4 billion in economic activity to the state of Connecticut and the surrounding region, representing \$1.2 billion in wages and 18,000 full-time jobs.<sup>2</sup>

The has made great strides in the last few years but clearly we have a long way to go if the airport is to meet its enormous economic potential. CBIA continues to agree with the conclusions of the 1999 Schiphol report on Bradley that concluded the airport's competitiveness could be improved by treating the airport not just as a transportation facility, but as a business focused on return on investment.<sup>3</sup>

The creation of the Bradley International Airport Board of Directors in 2001 was an important step in moving towards a more business-like model for the airport. More steps need to be taken. Bradley remains one of only 2 state-run airports in the country. Without greater freedom to move quickly and independently from some of the more cumbersome and time-consuming constraints associated with being a governmental entity, we fear the airport may have difficulty retaining even it's current level of economic activity, let alone achieve the exciting and crucial goals forecasted in the DECD report.

SB-107 and SB-109 represent additional steps that will move the airport towards greater economic competitiveness. SB-109 would reconstitute the board of directors, broaden

---

<sup>1</sup> The Contribution of Bradley International Airport to Connecticut's Economy, State of Connecticut Economic Impact Analysis, Department of Economic and Community Development, May 27, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> See DOT reference at: <http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?A=1373&Q=429554>

<sup>3</sup> Bradley International Airport, 'At the Crossroads'. Prepared by Schiphol Project Consult B.V., 1999.

the board's authority to hire managerial employees, approve significant contracts and to work with the State Contracting Standards Board to streamline competitive bidding for contractors, vendors, professional and other services. SB-107 would establish a geographic area around Bradley where municipalities could enter into agreements regarding fixed property assessments on applicable economic development investments for a period of years depending on the amount of investment. The bill also contains provisions to help manufacturers and technology-based businesses located in within the zone.

These bills substantially represent the provisions of SB-154, An Act Concerning the Administration of Bradley International Airport, from last year's (2009) legislative session. That bill received approval from 5 committees, including unanimous approval from this committee as well as favorable approval by the Senate on a 29-7 vote. Unfortunately, the measure reached the House Calendar shortly before the session ended and was not called.

CBIA hopes the Commerce Committee will again enthusiastically support these measures and will work with leadership in both the House and Senate to assure full passage early in this legislative session.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of these bills.