



**Testimony In Support Of Raised Bill No. 5461, An Act Concerning Revisions to Statutes
Relating to the Connecticut Airport Authority**

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Joint Committee on Transportation
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Dear Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrera, Senator Boucher, Representative Scribner,
and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee,

My name is Kevin Dillon, and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA). I am submitting this testimony in support of Raised Bill No. 5461, An Act Concerning Revisions to Statutes Relating to the Connecticut Airport Authority.

The proposals set forth in this piece of legislation are crucial for the effective operation of the Connecticut Airport Authority and its necessary responsiveness to the rapidly changing needs of the airport industry. This bill will also alleviate various complications that became apparent during and after the Department of Transportation (DOT) formally completed the transfer of its authorities to the CAA.

The four, major sections of this legislation include the following initiatives:

1. **Staffing Procedures:** Section 2 will exempt the CAA from complying with Department of Administrative Services and the Office of Policy and Management personnel policies and procedures with regard to approval for the creation of certain new positions, the number of such positions, the decision to fill such positions, or the time for filling such positions. This adjustment will streamline the process and allow the Authority to adequately staff itself in a manner that is appropriately reactive to rapidly changing business conditions. This section follows a precedent set by the Lottery Corporation statutes, as they relate to this matter.
2. **Retirement Plan Exemption:** Section 3 will provide the CAA flexibility to allow certain, unclassified employees to opt-out of the State Retirement System. When airport industry employees reach the highest levels of airport administration, they often will not commit to a 10-year employment term. As such, the cost burden and 10-year cliff vesting of the State Retirement System's Tier III retirement plan limits the CAA's ability to attract highly qualified candidates for crucial positions. Furthermore, in order to attract these employees, the CAA will be required to implement deferred compensation plans. The cost of the State Retirement System (which will provide no attraction to these employees), along with the cost of the deferred compensation plan, will not allow the CAA to offer

competitive salaries and benefits. This section will let the CAA offer alternatives to the State Retirement System and maintain flexibility when hiring non-classified employees.

3. Employee Trade Licensing: Section 4 will provide the CAA with the same exemption from certain occupational licensing requirements currently in place for state agencies. Section 20-340 of the general statutes, as currently written, provides a long list of persons exempt from licensing, registration, and other requirements imposed upon electricians, plumbers, solar installers, heating installers, piping and cooling contractors and journeymen, and gas hearth installer contractors and journeymen. Prior to the CAA transfer, DOT employees performed work at the airports and, since they were state employees, they did not need to be licensed to perform such work. When DOT employees transferred to the CAA, they were no longer classified as state employees. Therefore, without an exemption, they would need licensure to perform the work they had been doing for years. The proposed substitution preserves the status quo by simply adding CAA employees to the list of exempt persons and allowing the CAA to utilize these experienced workers.
4. General Aviation Budget Allocations: Section 1 would have allowed for the Legislature to directly appropriate the funds in conjunction with the operation of the General Aviation Airports to the CAA. Currently, the statutes state that the Commissioner of Transportation shall make available any funds appropriated for use in connection with the General Aviation Airports. After examining this issue further, I am prepared to respectfully withdraw my request for this proposal, with the expectation that CAA funds will be clearly delineated as a separate line-item within the Transportation Fund.

I am confident that this legislation will assist the CAA in its efforts to function as a nimble and autonomous body that is tasked with managing Bradley International Airport and the five General Aviation Airports, as well as establishing them as major economic drivers in the State.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.

Sincerely,



Kevin A. Dillon, A.A.E.
Executive Director
Connecticut Airport Authority