



Testimony In Support Of House Bill No. 6823, An Act Concerning the Connecticut Airport Authority's Recommendations Regarding Operation of the Authority, Airport Development Zone Administration and the Authority's Jurisdiction Over Aeronautics in the State

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

Joint Committee on Transportation
February 23, 2015

Dear Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, Senator Boucher, Representative O'Dea, 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 House Bill No. 6823, An Act Concerning the Connecticut Airport Authority's Recommendations Regarding Operation of the Authority, Airport Development Zone Administration and the Authority's Jurisdiction Over Aeronautics in the State.**

The creation of the CAA, initiated and championed by this committee, has already proven to be a major success. In 2014, Bradley International Airport experienced 8.3% year-over-year passenger growth, which is a very high level of growth in the aviation industry. This success is primarily a result of a renewed focus on route development, enhanced concession offerings, and targeted marketing efforts. The CAA has also made significant progress in its conversations with a number of airlines to work towards re-establishing direct, nonstop transatlantic service at Bradley. Finally, the CAA has initiated major projects to enhance the infrastructure at all of its airports, including the demolition of Terminal B at Bradley, the construction of a new ground transportation center at Bradley, and a significant investment of FAA grants, State and CAA funds towards capital investments at the CAA's five general aviation airports. It was an exciting year of progress for the CAA, and this Committee should be commended for its efforts to establish the Authority and promote aviation in the region.

I offer this testimony in support of a bill that will help the CAA maintain momentum and continue providing the safe, convenient, and enjoyable access to aviation that our regional passengers deserve. I would like to briefly outline some of the major sections of this legislation.

Section 1 would amend the CAA Advisory Committee that was created by the legislature last year to incorporate at least one representative from Western Massachusetts. Nearly 20% of Bradley's market base resides in Western Massachusetts, and I believe that this proposal would help keep that crucial population engaged and establish Western Massachusetts as a key stakeholder in the airport.

Section 2 would increase the nonbudgeted expenditure cap without prior Board approval from \$5,000 to \$500,000. As you surely know, an airport is a dynamic environment where, from time to time, emergency expenditures are required to ensure safe operations. This proposal seeks to increase the cap in the event of certain emergency situations, and it provides a reporting clause that would require the Executive Director to report any such expenditure to the Board Chair or Vice Chair

within 24 hours of the expenditure. This proposal would provide necessary flexibility in emergency situations and help ensure safety at our facilities and operations

Sections 3 through 6 and Section 64 would shift the administration of the airport development zone from the CAA to DECD. The CAA has been advised by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that the CAA's continued administration of this economic development program will constitute a violation of the FAA's revenue diversion policy. The CAA proposes shifting the airport development zone program to DECD, where specialized staff already administers similar programs, such as the enterprise zone program. Transferring the program to DECD should ensure a smooth transition as the CAA seeks to become compliant with FAA regulations.

Sections 4 through 63 would clarify the CAA's jurisdiction over aeronautics in the State of Connecticut. The CAA asserts that the intent of the CAA enabling statute was to transfer all aeronautics-related functions from the DOT to the CAA. The fact that all aviation-related employees were transferred from the DOT to the CAA, leaving the DOT without specialized staff to handle aeronautics functions, demonstrates this intent. These sections would help clarify the intent of enabling statutes and clearly transfer all state aeronautics functions to the CAA. We have reviewed the bill as drafted, and we respectfully request to continue discussions with the Committee regarding the technical language in these sections.

I believe that these proposals are crucial to the effective management of the CAA, and I strongly support passage of HB-6823. Please feel free to contact me at (860) 292-2054 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin A. Dillon".

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