



Luke A. Bronin
Mayor

Program Review and Investigations Committee
Testimony on Interim Update for the Study on Hartford-Brainard Airport Site - July 19,
2016

Chairman Fonfara, Chairwoman Carpino, Ranking Members Kissel and Mushinsky, and members of the Program Review and Investigations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here before you today.

As you know, Hartford-Brainard Airport occupies approximately 200 acres of land situated along the Connecticut River near the intersection of I-91 and I-84. The site is in close proximity to Hartford's downtown, and immediately adjacent to the newly-redeveloped Coltsville neighborhood, soon to include Coltsville National Park. As the PRI Committee fulfills its charge of examining whether the current use of the site represents the highest and best use of a large, developable, strategically-located parcel of land, I believe the conclusion is plain and inescapable: the Hartford-Brainard Airport does not represent the most effective use of land for the benefit of the City of Hartford, the Greater Hartford Region, or the State of Connecticut.

At present, the airport provides little direct value to the city of Hartford. As the land is owned by the Connecticut Airport Authority, the City collects no property taxes on the real property located there. As airplanes are exempt from Connecticut's property tax, the City collects no property taxes from the airplanes hangared there. The Brainard airport generated approximately \$20,000 in fees and \$400,000 in Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) in 2015. The current use of 200 acres of strategically-located, developable real estate as a recreational airport thus comes at a remarkably high opportunity cost for Connecticut's Capital City.

Hartford-Brainard also provides little indirect economic value to the City of Hartford or to the region. Hartford-Brainard cannot accommodate most jet traffic. Bradley Airport, which handles the vast majority of commercial traffic, including both private jet traffic and cargo traffic, is located only twenty minutes from Hartford's downtown and Hartford-Brainard. The primary beneficiary of the Hartford-Brainard Airport is a relatively small number of private, recreational pilots or small charter operators. While I have nothing against recreational pilots and while I have no doubt that Hartford-Brainard Airport is a charming and convenient airport to those



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airplane owners who use it, either for pleasure or convenience, the airport provides little economic value to the State, to the Capital City, or to the region.

I have no preconceptions about the most effective use for the 200 riverfront acres on which Hartford-Brainard sits. The most appropriate way to maximize the value of such a site would be to seek proposals from private developers and determine which proposals (a) produce the most economic activity, job growth and tax revenue, while (b) making appropriate use of the only part of Connecticut's Capital City that has not been severed from a beautiful riverfront.

Finally, among the interim study's findings were that Brainard currently operates at a net loss despite significant federal and state subsidies. With the economic reality we face in Connecticut, we cannot afford to provide significant subsidies to entities that provide limited economic benefits for the State while imposing very real and substantial opportunity costs on the City of Hartford and the Capital Region.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luke Bronin", is written over a horizontal line.

Luke Bronin
Mayor of Hartford