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Raised Bill 7143 – An Act Concerning the Length of Runway 2-20 at Tweed New Haven Airport

To the Members of the Committee on TRANSPORTATION,

I am writing this testimony in opposition to the proposed elimination of the restriction on the length of runway 2-20 at Tweed New Haven Airport.

In 2009 the cities of New Haven and East Haven agreed on the current length of the runway 2-20 which resulted in the law that you are asked to change. However, in these last 10 years no major changes have occurred that would warrant an extension of the runway.

1. The economic viability is based on wrong assumptions.

Since years, Tweed NH Airport, the city and proponents claim to represent one of the most underserved air-markets in the country. Just this January one could read in the New Haven Independent that “over 4 million passengers live closer to Tweed-New Haven Regional than any other airport” (https://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/tweed_CAA/). The wrong figures date further back: In a letter to residents on April 28, 2015 the Mayor Harp stated: “With nearly 1.4 million residents living closer to Tweed than other surrounding airports ...”. One wonders, what are the correct numbers, what size is the closest market?

Connecticut has about a total population of 3.6 million people. The metropolitan area of New Haven counted 861,113 people in 2011 according to the US census. The Greater New Haven region which Mayor Harp mentioned is based on which communities? Additional surrounding towns like Trumbull, Meriden or Groton? However, many of these cities' inhabitants live in multi airport regions, meaning their residences fall also in catchment areas of other airports within 50 miles (such as Bradley, CT, LaGuardia, NY, Westchester White Plains, NY, or TF Green in Providence, RI to name a few). Someone in Meriden drives 39 min. to Bradley or 36 min. to Tweed. From Trumbull it takes 41 min. to Tweed or 45 min. to Westchester. From Groton to Green 47 min. are listed as travel time by Google, which is 4 minutes shorter than to Tweed (51 min.).

If Tweed, the city of New Haven and the proponents of the legislative change cannot properly determine their market, how and why would one believe that their economic analysis is proper?

2. Possible economic benefits of Tweed New Haven are artificially inflated, while negative competitive effects – “cannibalism” – within Connecticut are downplayed: Or how many airports can Connecticut afford to subsidize with tax dollars during a time of austerity?

Yes, a Tweed expansion as planned and paid by tax payers would also hurt taxpayers' investments at Bradley. According to a Study by the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis, it is assumed that 50 % of the possible increased passenger enplanements at Tweed-New Haven come at the expense of Bradley. (<https://webshare.business.uconn.edu/ccea/studies/Tweed-New-Haven-Impact.pdf>).

3. The Economic Impact Analysis for Tweed by SH&E (paid by Tweed itself in 2011)

includes dubious calculations. While visitors come to New Haven via the airport, they do not come because of the airport (or do you visit Paris because of Orly or Charles-de-Gaulles – both about 45 minutes by car from the center during the day). The analysts speculated for example that each of the about 13,875 out-of-state-visitors arriving at Tweed would spend about \$ 600 in the New Haven area. This total annual spending of \$8,325,000 is presented by the authors as economic output thanks to the airport (http://www.flytweed.com/files/SH&E_FINAL_Econ_Impact%202-15-11.pdf). Many of these visitors, however, are in town because of Yale, not because of Tweed. Thus these dollars cannot be included in any economic benefit calculation. Or as I wrote earlier: the economic benefit of Tweed is inflated. Wrong numbers again.

To sum up this argument: **The economic viability is make-believe.** With an elimination of the runway restrictions you will hurt Bradley, hurt Connecticut's taxpayers, and hurt this neighborhood. While in 2018 – the last try to get rid of the length restrictions – we got promised neighborhood benefits, this time we will only get more traffic on residential streets and more noise due to possibly larger planes: In the end this is about a 7,200-foot runway. **It is about possibly Airbus 320s starting and landing, since these kind of planes need such a length. The SH&E analysis points out Boeing 737 or A320s as necessary to make Tweed economically viable** (p. 21).

For all these reasons, I ask your committee to oppose the proposed raised bill 7143.

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