

To the Chair and Members of the Transportation Committee:

HB 7143 cannot go forward. I and many other members of the surrounding community oppose it strongly, as we opposed a similar bill in 2018.

Tweed New Haven airport's operations are not sustainable and have not been stable for decades, relying upon millions of dollars in handouts from Connecticut and New Haven taxpayers to limp through the 21st Century. While the "Tweed experiment" continues, the airport threatens the quality of life, environment, and health of local residents.

Airport director Larson's departure and the Connecticut Airport Authority takeover have been spun as a bright new future for Tweed but are, in fact, an admission of failure. Tweed is not viable as an independent airport and the CAA must intervene to save it.

This latest bid to expand Tweed comes while the State has already decided to invest millions in commercial flights at Sikorsky Memorial Airport, as well as continuing the expanded service at Bradley. Is Connecticut really ready to support commercial service at three airports, with many millions from the struggling State coffers?

We've been down this road before. Just last year, a bill was introduced that would have also removed restrictions on Tweed's expansion. Then, as now, there is no guarantee that the airport will only expand within its current borders. To the contrary, HB 7143 removes *all* restrictions.

No one has been able to give an exact number for the supposedly "minor" expansion. Is it 6,000? 6,600? Or more? HB 7143 doesn't propose a new number in Section 15-120j of the Airport Authority Act, it just removes any requirements for a specific length.

How can local residents see this as anything but one more step in the Tweed Master Plan from 2002, which calls for an expansion of 7,200 feet? Why shouldn't we believe Tweed board members when they talk about plans for a huge new terminal on the East Haven side – plans that already exist in Tweed documents with a vastly expanded runway and airport footprint (work that would, for example, require the closing of roads, removal of houses, and filling of wetlands)?

Community skepticism is well-founded, as Mayor Harp has now ripped up the 2009 Memorandum of Agreement between New Haven and East Haven. That document was the product of many years of conflict, legal and political, and was supposed to have contained the parameters for the "last expansion" for Tweed. The limit was 5,600 feet, period. The MOA was followed by the Tweed-New Haven Airport Authority Act, which was supported by Toni Harp while she served as a State Senator.

With the MOA gone, there are no credible grounds for mediation. Tweed and the City have moved from a strategy of faux-engagement with the surrounding community to complete indifference and confrontation. They have heard the voice of residents and they don't like it, so now they will ignore it.

Tweed and the City have dispensed with the smokescreen of goodwill and can't meet with the community in good faith, for any agreement or "benefits package". Residents in New Haven and East Haven now know for certain that there can be no negotiation, that legal agreements will be ripped up on a whim by politicians.

Expansion will not stop at "a few feet", as Tweed's internal documents show. Tweed statistics show the "break even" point for the airport at 240,000 enplanements. That's a far cry from current (generous) 28-30K annual numbers.

If an exponential increase in air traffic is necessary for success, the drumbeat for expansion will need to be continuous. This is consistent with the airport's internal plans. If the airport remains a financial

albatross, as the past two decades and industry trends suggest, millions of dollars in Federal grants will have to be repaid. For this reason, and others, the 2009 New Haven Budget Review Panel recommended that the City "make transferring ownership of Tweed... an urgent priority". It also stated that "the citizens of New Haven receive no quantifiable benefit from Tweed", "there is no direct financial upside to Tweed", and "Tweed represents a significant potential financial liability for New Haven".

Is the transportation committee, and the State legislature after that, ready for the burden that Tweed represents? Even if we ignore the quality of life, health, and (completely unknown) environmental impact, there is good reason for the State to keep the Airport Authority Act in its current form. Allowing HB 7143 to continue will allow the fallout from the failing Tweed experiment to continue growing, eating through millions of taxpayer dollars in the process, as well as damaging plans for Bradley and Sikorsky.

Thank you for your time,

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