

## Testimony in Support of H.B. 7143, “An Act Concerning Shared Solar Facilities and Municipal Airports”

*Planning and Development Committee, March 19, 2018*

Representative Lemar, Senator Leone, and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee,

My name is Roger Senserrich, and I am resident in East Haven, Connecticut, and I write this testimony today **in support of H.B. 7143**, “*An Act Concerning the Length of Runway 2-20 at Tweed-New Haven Airport.*” More specifically, I write in support of section 1, subsection c, repealing the length limit of Tweed-New Haven Airport’s runway.

For the past four years, my family has lived less than a mile from the runways of Tweed-New Haven Airport. I am well aware of the noise than a small airport generates, and I am more than familiar with the sound of low flying airplanes in our neighborhood. I know that an airport is a nuisance for those that live close by; we knew that when we bought our house. Tweed has served New Haven travelers since 1929.

I am also aware, however, that good flight connections are a requirement for the economic vitality of any city. For a metro area like New Haven, with growing technologic, bioscience, health and education sectors, these connections are especially important for local companies to attract and retain talent. The Fiscal Stability Commission included, as one of its recommendations<sup>1</sup>, extending service to Tweed Airport, explicitly mentioning lengthening the runway. If we want to develop world-class businesses and grow an innovative, growing class of startups in these growth sectors, New Haven cannot rely solely on Bradley Airport, more than 50 miles away, or a Metro-North rail line to New York City that runs slower today than it did in 1949<sup>2</sup>.

I have learned first hand of researchers at other Ivy League universities that have passed on offers from Yale due to New Haven’s poor flight connections with critical hubs. We cannot let opportunities and talent skip our city like this.

I fully understand that some of my neighbors find the airport a nuisance. Tweed-New Haven has made a real effort to mitigate some of the externalities (noise, traffic) that it generates. The airport should step up these efforts, extending them as needed.

The General Assembly, however, should not fall again into the “Not In My Backyard” attitude that often haunts economic development efforts in our state. Yes, a larger runway has social costs, both for my family and for many of my neighbors. The benefits of expanding the airport, however, greatly outweigh the small sacrifices, and will help New Haven and Connecticut attract much needed economic investment. Blocking the runway expansion would only add to our economic woes.

It is time to stop looking at what we do not want to do and start thinking about what we can do to bring economic growth to our state. I urge the committee to support H.B. 7143.

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<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Commission On Fiscal Stability And Economic Growth, Final Report , p.9, p.37.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.streamlinerschedules.com/concourse/track3/merchantsltd194903.html>