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Bill To Help Expedite Airport Projects Clears Congress.

The U.S. Senate approved a measure to permit the use of Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funds to provide incentives for the early completion of airport projects. Passed by unanimous consent on September 28, the Expedited Delivery of Airport Infrastructure Act of 2021, H.R.468, now heads to the White House for President Joe Biden's signature. Introduced by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and aviation subcommittee Republican leaders Reps. Sam Graves (Missouri) and Garret Graves (Louisiana), respectively, the Airport Infrastructure Act was approved by the House in June 2021.

Under the bill, AIP grants can be awarded to public agencies and other entities to plan, develop, and execute infrastructure projects at public-use airports, such as runways and taxiways, in a timely manner.

"This proven, smart reform is already in use for road and bridge construction, and it's just common sense to make this same incentivization tool available for the construction of aviation infrastructure projects," said Sam Graves. "Delivering airport projects ahead of schedule will save money and essentially provide a similar impact as increasing investment without requiring any additional federal resources."

Garret Graves agreed: "This bill will help change the way we facilitate airport construction. Every day an airport project isn't completed, project costs go up and opportunities for economic activity via tourism and business development are missed."

National Air Transportation Association (NATA) president and CEO Curt Castagna praised the bill saying it will support "critical upkeep and modernization of our airport infrastructure."

The bill is among a "flurry of legislative activity" that Congress undertook before the break for the midterm elections, NATA noted, including the passage of a continuing resolution to continue funding of the federal government through December 16, as well as House passage of the National Center for the Advancement of Aviation Act of 2022, H.R. 3482, to establish a federally chartered, private center to support the aviation workforce.

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