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Airports Call for Infrastructure Investment and Regulatory Relief.

Airports Council International – North America (ACI-NA) on Feb. 12, called on the Trump Administration and Congress to identify a clear funding mechanism to address the significant infrastructure needs of America's airports following the unveiling of the Rebuilding Infrastructure in America proposal by President Donald J. Trump.

"The infrastructure proposal put forward by President Trump addresses a number of regulatory burdens long identified by the airport industry as barriers to infrastructure development," said ACI-NA President and CEO Kevin M. Burke. "Airports will continue to pursue legislation that will not only provide meaningful regulatory relief but also a clear investment mechanism to meet the $100 billion in well-documented airport infrastructure needs across the country."

ACI-NA also released its own set of airport infrastructure principles that should be addressed by any infrastructure plan. By acting on these principles, Congress can provide airports with greater flexibility and local control to better serve their passengers and benefit their local communities now and into the future.

Modernize the Passenger Facility Charge Program

The Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) is a local user fee airports can use to upgrade their facilities, improving the passenger experience and spurring airline competition. Congress should give airports the locally controlled self-help they need to finance critical infrastructure projects by eliminating the outdated federal cap on the user fee and streamline the cumbersome application and approval process to reduce construction costs. Congress also has the opportunity to enhance airport security by expanding PFC eligibility to include all security projects that airports are responsible for funding.

Enhance the Airport Improvement Program

The Airport Improvement Program (AIP) – supported entirely by users of the aviation system with no general fund revenues used for AIP grants – finances crucial safety, security, and capacity projects at airports of all sizes. In order to continue to be a viable funding mechanism for airports, AIP needs to be updated by Congress. Needed updates to the program include an increase in the amount of money contributed annually to AIP and the creation of an airport terminal development grant program.

Relieve Costly Land-Use Regulatory Burdens on Airports

Reducing the regulatory burden on airports would empower them to act in a business-like manner that accelerates innovation, construction, and job growth. To reduce the unnecessary federal red tape that can slow airport-development projects, Congress should eliminate the requirement for FAA approval for airports to dispose, use, or lease non-airfield property purchased without federal funding. Congress should also eliminate the requirement that FAA approve non-aeronautical improvements.

Help Airports Finance Critical Infrastructure Projects with Bonds

Airports often turn to the bond market to help finance their infrastructure projects. To help lower airport borrowing costs, Congress should maintain the tax-exempt status of public purpose municipal bonds and private activity bonds to ensure that airports can continue to finance critical infrastructure projects. In addition, Congress should exclude interest earned on airport private activity bonds from the alternative minimum tax and Allow advance refundings on all municipal bonds.

Establish an Airport Security Grant Program

In accordance with an Aviation Security Advisory Committee recommendation, Congress should establish an airport security-focused grant program at TSA to support the deployment of perimeter, access control, automated screening lanes, and other security technology at airports. Airport operators have limited funding available that must be prioritized across a multitude of safety, security, and operational projects. While DHS's existing grant programs have dispensed billions of dollars for systems and technology to bolster state, tribal, and local security, very little, if any, has been allocated to airports.

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