

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 22, 2020

The Honorable Stephen M. Dickson
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Dickson,

We are writing in support of the expedited completion of an environmental assessment (EA) for construction of an aviation maintenance school at Paulding Northwest Atlanta Airport in Paulding County, Georgia.

The aviation industry plays a critical role in the state of Georgia with industry leaders such as Delta Air Lines, Gulfstream and Pratt & Whitney, as well as the nation's busiest airport, Hartsfield-Jackson International, all located within the state. In fact, Georgia ranks fourth in the nation for the number of individuals employed in the aviation field and job growth outlook for the industry exceeds national averages over the next ten years. Accordingly, and with support from both industry and the local community, the state of Georgia has prioritized creating a stable pipeline of highly skilled talent to meet industry demand.

In October 2018, it was announced that the Technical College System of Georgia would establish an Aviation Academy at Silver Comet Field in Paulding County. With the new academy, Chattahoochee Tech plans to offer FAA-certified technical certificates of credit (TCC), diplomas and associate of applied science degrees in Aviation Maintenance. As a part of this proposal, Chattahoochee Tech aims to build a school facility adjacent to Paulding Northwest Atlanta Airport.

In order to advance this project, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) recently submitted a draft Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) proposal to the FAA for consideration. Unfortunately, despite prior environmental assessments and broad community support for this project, the FAA decided that the CATEX was not the appropriate level of environmental review for this project and that an EA must be completed before the FAA could release the land. This is particularly concerning, given that further action in the Georgia Legislature, whose session is anticipated to end no later than early April, is required after FAA approval.

While we were disappointed about the FAA's decision to require an additional EA, we are hopeful that such an assessment can be completed in an expedited manner. As such, we ask the FAA to provide an expected completion timeline for an EA that addresses the concerns we share with the Paulding County community and allows the Georgia Legislature to plan the state's budget accordingly.

Sincerely,



David A. Perdue
United States Senator



Kelly Loeffler
United States Senator



Tom Graves
Member of Congress

Cc: Secretary Elaine Chao, U.S. Department of Transportation
Governor Brian Kemp
Commissioner Russell McMurry, Georgia Department of Transportation