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April 2, 2020

The Honorable Joel Szabat
Assistant Secretary of Aviation and International Affairs
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Docket DOT-OST-2020-0037-COMENTS ON SHOW CAUSE ORDER

Dear Assistant Secretary Szabat:

On behalf of the County of York, I am requesting the inclusion of the Newport News/ Williamsburg International Airport (PHF) as a service point for the purposes of the CARES Act. It has been brought to our attention that our airport is being excluded from the provisions of the CARES Act because of our seeming proximity to Norfolk. It is important that we provide an explanation as to the reasons it is imperative that PHF be included.

The Hampton Roads region is both advantaged and disadvantaged by our location. We are surrounded by water. Our connectivity and economic prosperity is dependent upon our citizens and visitors being able to transverse major waterways that include numerous bridges and tunnels. Currently, the region's residents, commuters and visitors face daily traffic and congestion problems. It is not uncommon for any one or more of the bridges or tunnels to be obstructed or closed due to accidents or other traffic related issues resulting in extended delays. The ongoing challenge of moving people between the Peninsula and the Southside is one of the reasons why two airports have continued to thrive and grow in this area. We, as a region, are investing billions of dollars in the next few years to address the condition and capacity of our major water crossings; however, until those projects are at or nearing completion, we struggle with a transportation system that is strained to move goods and services from one land mass to the other.

Compound our transportation challenges with the rich portfolio of business and government facilities on the Virginia Peninsula, and the urgent need for reliable air transportation comes more into focus. Most notably, Newport News is home to Huntington Ingalls Industries, the nation's only builder of Navy aircraft carriers and one of only two builders of nuclear submarines. Newport News is also the home of Jefferson National Laboratory, which annually hosts

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hundreds of visiting scientists from around the world to perform research that can only be done at JLAB.

The Virginia Peninsula is the home of several high profile military installations and commands located at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, home to the Army's Training & Doctrine Command, Joint Task Force-Civil Support, and Air Combat Command, as well as Yorktown Naval Weapons Station and Coast Guard Training Center-Yorktown, all of whom are heavily reliant on the services provided by Newport News/Williamsburg (PHF) airport. The elimination of commercial air service at our local airport, which provides the quickest and best option, will impact their operations.

With the loss of commercial air traffic, an additional concern is the potential impact for tower staffing that facilitates military training operations on the use of two runways (6,526 feet and 8,003 feet) which provides ample space to conduct training and support. Should any situation arise when the water crossings between the Peninsula and the Southside are impassable, the lack of ready access to air transportation would be extremely problematic.

We understand that the CARES Act is intended to be an economic relief and stimulus package. The plan as proposed will not only fail to provide relief, it will instead compound the impact of the recession, by creating an undue hardship for our businesses and federal facilities, further congesting an already overloaded ground transportation system as well, and requiring us to try to move people through tunnels and construction to other airports.

We strongly believe even a temporary loss of air service at PHF would have a negative, long-term impact on our business and regional economy – exactly what the Department and Federal government are trying to alleviate in the intent of the CARES Act and this proposal. We understand the need for air carriers to have some flexibility in their business operations without an undue burden; however, for the Newport News-Williamsburg Airport specifically, this current proposal does not support that intent.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Chad Green". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and a stylized "G".

W. Chad Green, Chairman
York County Board of Supervisors

WCG: hls

Copy to: York County Board of Supervisors
Neil A. Morgan, County Administrator