

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 22, 2024

Matthew J. Thys, Manager
Washington Airports District Office
Federal Aviation Administration
13873 Park Center Road, Suite 4905
Herndon, Virginia 20171

Dear Mr. Thys:

We write to you today in support of the Peninsula Airport Commission's (PAC) plan for Newport News-Williamsburg International Airport, also known as Patrick Henry Field (PHF). Hampton Roads as a region is rich in aviation assets with 10 civil airports, seven military-federal airports, several heliports, and over 60 aviation stakeholders. Among those assets, PHF is one of the pre-eminent aviation assets in the country, and certainly on the East Coast. With 1,800 acres of land and capacity for modernization, it is a select location for strategically balancing commercial air service and supporting emerging aviation markets, unmanned flight and aerial systems and advanced air mobility research and development and manufacturing.

In the current 2024 Master Plan, two critical alternatives to address facility requirements were identified and evaluated: (i) revising airfield apron, runway, and taxiway geometry; and (ii) maintaining the proposed extension of runway 7/25. It was noted in the 2014 Master Plan that the close alignment of Runways 2 and 7, and their intersection, requires further evaluation due to the potential for disruption of pilot situational awareness.

We understand the PAC is in the process of updating its Master Plan to include an update to the Airport Improvement Plan and Airport Development Plan. We further understand that as part of the updated Masterplan, the PAC will likely seek Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) permission to decommission a portion of Runway 2/20 to modernize the airfield and to execute recommendations contained within FAA Engineering Brief 75 - Incorporation of Runway Incursion Prevention in Taxiway and Apron Design. According to studies of PHF, Runway 7/25 can accommodate the entire existing and forecasted fleet mix such that decommissioning a portion of Runway 2/20 would not decrease efficiency or airfield capability. Additionally, we understand that the PAC will seek authorization to extend Runway 7/25 to 10,000 feet to accomplish the strategic vision of PHF by enabling the accommodation of larger aircraft with longer stage lengths, thus providing the capability to accommodate wide-body aircraft that would fly a stage length of approximately 4,000 nautical miles with full passenger loads.

We strongly encourage the FAA to review and approve, in an expedited manner, the partial decommissioning and extension requests when the proposal is submitted by the PAC. The FAA's approval will assist PHF in increasing safety on the airfield and enabling the strategic recommendations of diversifying aviation resources and enterprise at PHF that will support existing commercial aviation and promote emerging aviation technologies and markets that will facilitate long-term growth at PHF.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress