



June 10, 2019

Ohio Senate Finance Committee
The Ohio Statehouse
1 Capital Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Written Testimony in Support of the Ohio Aviation Association's amendments to H.B. 166

Dear Members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing in support of the three amendments the Ohio Aviation Association has placed before your Committee; Increased funding to the Ohio Airport Grant Program from \$5.9 to \$16 Million, the creation of an Air Service Development Grant Fund in the amount of \$15 million, and, lastly, the creation of an Aviation Student Loan Program in the amount of \$15 million.

While all of the amendments are with merit and advance the aviation infrastructure and economic development of the State of Ohio, I wish to share how the Ohio Airport Grant Program has benefitted the Ashtabula County Airport Authority (ACAA) dba the Northeast Ohio Regional Airport (formerly the Ashtabula County Airport).

The ACAA was created by county government in 1965 as an Ohio Regional Airport Authority by a single page resolution with the stated purpose to be an economic driver for the county. Construction of the airport commenced in 1967 at a cost of approximately \$500,000, including \$100,000 of support from the Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of Aviation Funds.

For the period of 2011 to 2018, the ACAA has received \$985,000 in ODOT grants which in part supported the Local Match of \$9.4 million of FAA funding. These funds were used to completely reconstruct and extend the jet capable runway including a Runway Safety Area, obstruction removal and the rehabilitation of taxiway pavement which resulted in the airport being one of two fully safety compliant land based airports in Ohio.

However, there are other ACAA/NEORA projects which require funding and in which we compete with other general aviation, Ohio Airport System facilities. The current funding of \$5.9 million of the Ohio Aviation Grant Program is insufficient to support the needed repair and replacement of airport pavements and other safety related improvements required to sustain Ohio's aviation infrastructure and

protect the economic welfare of Ohio. For this reason, the amendment to increase the program funding to \$16 million is with absolute merit.

Thank you in advance for your interest and consideration of my position.

Sincerely,
Ashtabula County Airport Authority
Northeast Ohio Regional Airport



Dwight H. Bowden
President

Cc: Ashtabula County Airport Authority Board of Trustees
Ms. Barbara Ford, ACAA Secretary-Treasurer