

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 24, 2020

Mr. Stephen Dickson
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Mr. Dickson,

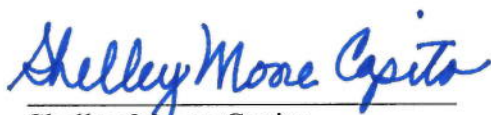
It was brought to our attention that Huntington Tri-State Airport (HTS) has been included in a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) study that could result in the reduction of operational hours for their Air Traffic Control Tower. The study has the potential of reducing the control tower's operational hours between 10pm and 6am. Twenty-four hour coverage is crucial for HTS in order for them to provide the necessary level of safety and service. We respectfully request that the control tower at HTS be removed from consideration and maintain their twenty-four hour control tower operations.

The Tri-State Airport is the second-busiest airport in the state of West Virginia and handles commercial airlines as well as air cargo, military, and general aviation traffic. The mountainous terrain makes the twenty-four hour coverage from the air traffic tower critical to the level of safety when managing these operations. For example, of the current air carriers serving the Tri-State Airport Allegiant, American, and FedEx would be impacted by the reduction in hours. Both Allegiant and American have late night flights that may – due to delays – overlap during arrival or ultimately have to be cancelled. For FedEx, they operate both arrival and departure flights during the 10pm and 6am timeframe. If FedEx would move their entire operations to another airport, it would have huge negative economic impacts on the region.

Moreover, medical flights operate out of and utilize HTS in order to provide transport services for at least five major hospitals in the area. These flights are needed during emergencies and could occur at any time, day or night. The reduction of operational hours at the control tower could have a negative impact on these services.

A reduction of service from HTS's air traffic control tower could be detrimental to the level of service and safety currently being provided at HTS. The FAA's proposed reduction could hinder the services being provided. We respectfully request that the FAA remove the Tri-State Airport from this study and allow them to continue their twenty-four hour operations.

Sincerely,



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator