

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 13, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We write to request a swift review of the request by the Central West Virginia Regional Airport Authority's for a Categorical Exclusion for the Taxiway A relocation project at West Virginia International Yeager Airport (CRW). The overall project and the proposed terminal will address service gaps throughout rural West Virginia and will have an immense impact on the economic growth of the state, allowing for additional airlines, increased flight capacity, and greater economic development and tourism opportunities for visitors and residents alike.

The original terminal facility at CRW opened in 1950 and is one of the oldest in the nation. As an emerging outdoor recreation tourism destination, the airport will be where many visitors to West Virginia get their first impression of the state. With tourists visiting to the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, our nation's newest national park, and to take in the state's natural beauty and renowned whitewater rafting, it is imperative that the entry point for many visitors to West Virginia reflects the pride residents take in their state. Unfortunately, without an expedited review and decision by the Department of Transportation, that chance may pass us by.

We are proud that Congress passed the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) in August 2021, bringing historic investments to our state's infrastructure, including over \$43 million in additional funding for our state's airports. The IIJA also includes \$5 billion over 5 years in competitive grants through the Airport Terminal Program, which is intended to fund safe, sustainable and accessible airport terminals, on-airport rail access projects and airport-owned airport traffic control towers. As you have noted, this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to not just build new airport terminals, but build them in a way that brings opportunity to forgotten communities.

In order for CRW's terminal to be eligible for this historic funding through the IIJA, the airport has learned that it must first relocate its airport gates and concourse so that its main taxiway (Taxiway A) can be relocated to meet modern design standards through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for a required distance from the runway. While we understand the need to meet modern standards, we also recognize the urgency of the situation and believe

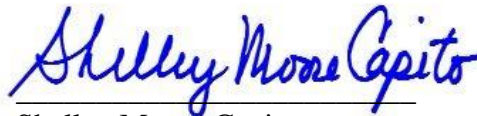
there is a solution that meets both the FAA's and CRW's needs for this project. Specifically, we request that the FAA grant a categorical exclusion so that the airport can proceed immediately for the taxiway relocation and the first phase of the terminal project. The airport has proposed relocating Taxiway A onto existing paved surface to bring the airport back into regulation. CRW is currently conducting an environmental review for their Runway Safety Improvement Project and greater terminal improvement project. We believe there is no legal impediment to the FAA conducting concurrent environmental analyses, and given that the project would take place on previously developed airport pavement, we believe it meets the requirements for a categorical exclusion, as it would not further impact air quality, biological resources, historical or cultural resources, noise standards, or water resources.

Yeager Airport serves as a hub for manufacturing and businesses, spurring economic development in the region, and without an expedient review by your staff, this project faces years of potential red tape despite meeting all the necessary criteria. It is imperative that Yeager be eligible for funding through the Airport Terminal Program, and we ask that you swiftly approve the categorical exclusion for Yeager Airport's Taxiway A relocation project.

Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator