

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2308

September 18, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Polly Trottenberg
Deputy Secretary and Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Secretary Buttigieg and Acting Administrator Trottenberg:

As members of the Minnesota delegation, we write in support of the Duluth International Airport's (DLH) application for federal funding to rebuild its Air Traffic Control Tower. DLH is pursuing funding through the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Airport Terminal Program (ATP), made available by Public Law 117-58. We urge the FAA to expedite any reviews and approvals necessary for DLH's pursuit of this grant so they can successfully submit their ATP application for FY 2024. Specifically, we request the immediate completion of the requirements document workbook (RDWB) from the FAA that it needs to move forward with planning.

The DLH provides vital service to the region. Commercial, cargo, and medical service flights all utilize the airport. The DLH is home to Cirrus Aircraft, one of the largest manufacturers of piston aircraft in the world, and the 148th Fighter Wing of the Minnesota Air National Guard, making the airport crucial to our economic and national security. The airport supports over 6,000 jobs and contributes roughly \$760 million annually to the economy. However, the existing tower is 70 years old, making it the third oldest air traffic control tower in the country. It does not meet current FAA line-of-sight requirements, and it is deteriorating and in need of significant repairs. To sustain the growth of air commerce in this region of our state, a new air traffic control facility is necessary for enhanced safety and viability.

As a locally-owned air traffic facility staffed by FAA Controllers, the control tower at the DLH has previously not qualified for federal funding. The FAA's ATP program has presented a unique five-year opportunity to compete for funding. Two rounds of that funding have already been awarded.

For these reasons, we ask that the FAA work expeditiously to provide the DLH with any outstanding reviews or approvals necessary to submit a successful application, including the RDWB, which is critical to the design process of the new air traffic control facility.

Further, given that it will take approximately 12-14 months after the DLH receives all necessary documentation from FAA to complete final design for the new tower, we ask that you consider extending the anticipated July 2024 deadline for ATP grant applications to give the DLH an appropriate opportunity to compete for an ATP grant.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Michelle Fischbach
Member of Congress



Brad Finstad
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress