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7 June 2021

Hartford City Council
Hartford City Hall
550 Main St.
Hartford CT 06103

TRANSMITTED BY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

Email: Maly.Rosado@hartford.gov

Re: Resolution for the closure and reclamation of the state-owned Hartford-Brainard Airport.

Dear Council President Rosado and esteemed members of the Hartford City Council,

My name is Sean Collins, and I am the Eastern Regional Manager for the Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA). We are the world's largest aviation membership organization representing the general aviation interests of 330,000 aircraft owners and pilots across the country, including 3,184 in the state of Connecticut. I am writing to encourage the city of Hartford to favorably consider the public benefit provided by the Hartford-Brainard Airport (HFD) and work collaboratively with the Connecticut Airport Authority on the planned improvements to the airport.

Councilman Sanchez's resolution calling for the closure and reclamation of the state-owned Hartford-Brainard airport (HFD) is disconcerting and unfortunate. A [2016 legislative study](#) analyzing the 'highest and best use' of airport property determined that retaining the airport as an airport and investing in it further is the highest and best use of the property. HFD was credited with generating \$478,000 in direct annual payments to the city in addition to generating \$43 Million in annual statewide economic activity—most of which is centered in the greater Hartford area.

The Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA) has stated its desire to invest in HFD with a lengthened runway that would permit the airport to attract more business on and off the airport. Such investment would have an immediate positive impact on construction jobs and associated economic activity due to increased business and recreational travelers arriving at HFD. The lengthened runway would permit larger corporate aircraft whose companies would then be able to invest in new infrastructure, bringing permanent jobs and income.

HFD is listed in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) and has accepted Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding as recently as 2015. As a condition of accepting these grants, the state is bound by Title 49 U.S.C. §47107, which outlines a set of obligations known as grant assurances. An airport sponsor under such obligations is required to operate the property as an airport for at least 20 years. The FAA will not simply accept repayment of the grant in return for a release from the state's grant obligations.

According to the Connecticut Office of Climate Change, Technology and Research, the [2017 Connecticut Greenhouse Gas \(GhG\) Emissions Inventory](#), the local Transportation sector ("principally cars and trucks") accounts for 38.1% of state-based emissions with Electric power generation producing an additional 20.9% and homes accounting for 16.3%. The aviation industry accounts for a little over 2% of

global GhG emissions—the majority of which comes from air carrier operations which do not occur at HFD. While the aviation industry is responsible for a very small percentage of global emissions, it has responsibly committed to reducing GhG emissions and continues to make investments in sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), electric powerplant technologies, and other innovative initiatives to improve the efficiency and safety of aviation.

General aviation airports like HFD are an incredible resource for business growth and economic development. Business leaders from every industry rely on airports to increase efficiency, productivity, and accessibility for their business. Therefore, AOPA encourages the city of Hartford to follow the advice of the 2016 analysis and support the CAA's efforts to develop HFD further so citizens of Hartford continue to benefit from this important transportation asset.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. If AOPA can be of further assistance, please contact me at 301-695-2090.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean M. Collins", is centered on a light-colored rectangular background.

Sean M. Collins, AOPA
Eastern Regional Manager

CC:

Mayor Luke Bronin,
Hartford, Connecticut
SRIVV001@hartford.gov

Kevin Dillon, Executive Director
Connecticut Airport Authority
HartfordBrainard@ctairports.org