

State's Aviation Leaders Urge Renewed Public Investment in Airports

ALBANY, NY--March 12, 2013—Aviation industry executives traveled to Albany on Tuesday to discuss with state lawmakers the important role airports play in the state's economic development efforts. The aviation professionals are members of the New York Aviation Management Association (NYAMA), the Voice of Aviation in New York since 1976.

Aviation plays a critical role in New York's economic development infrastructure, and NYAMA seeks to enlist lawmakers to commit to an annual recurring investment in airports, which the state hasn't done since 2009.

NYAMA President Ann B. Crook and other Association officials report that this sector of the economy contributes over \$50 billion in annual economic activity in New York State and almost 400,000 jobs—nearly 5% of the total state workforce. “The economic benefits of New York State airports are impressive,” Crook and NYAMA members informed the many legislators with whom they met. “As a whole, aviation generates \$18 billion in payroll and \$4.5 billion in state and local tax revenue annually,” they said.

2012 cuts to the federally funded Airport Improvement Program would require the state budget to increase the funding available from \$4 million to \$8 million to fully leverage the federal investment. “It's important for the FY '13-'14 Budget to include this increase, recommended by the State Department of Transportation, rather than risk the loss of federal funds available for important New York airport enhancement projects,” Crook said. “And the budget must include a new state funding source for critical and income-generating airport projects,” she told lawmakers this week.

“As our economy begins to rebound, we need to ensure that New York State is competitively positioned relative to our neighboring states to take full advantage of the national recovery in the aviation industry,” Crook said. “Public investment in New York airports is critical to promoting job creation, economic development, and attracting long-term private investment to our state.”

NYAMA is also urging state lawmakers to enact the bipartisan-supported Aviation Jobs Act, a bill to eliminate the state sales and use tax on business jets. Since 2002, New York has lost nearly 700 based aircraft due in large part to more favorable tax treatment and aggressive marketing and airport-development strategies undertaken by other states in the Northeast. NYAMA successfully advocated for cuts to state maintenance and repair taxes on aircraft in 2004, resulting in the establishment since then of 32 new FAA-certified aviation businesses and 686 aviation-related jobs.

According to a NYSDOT study, attracting more business and corporate aviation to airports is key to increasing airport revenues and generating jobs. The study further noted that direct revenue impacts per airplane are up to five on-airport jobs and approximately \$1 million in annual economic activity.

The New York Aviation Management Association has nearly 13,000 members and affiliate members and represents over 120 commercial service and general aviation airports, fixed based operators, consultants, engineers and other aviation industries and professionals who believe that serious economic development efforts at the state and regional levels necessitate strong public investment in New York's aviation assets and facilities.