



August 22, 2011

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary LaHood:

Airports, like so many other sectors of the transportation industry, understand the impacts of the economy and the need to trim spending since airports have had to do the same. As you begin to prepare your Fiscal Year 2013 budget proposal, I urge you to consider the impact airports have as local economic engines in communities across the country. Now is the time for airports to invest in infrastructure, safety and security projects that not only benefit the traveling public but also create jobs and spur growth in cities and towns around the United States.

One of ACI-NA's priorities is to increase and strengthen the Airport Improvement Program (AIP). AIP is especially important for smaller airports that have less ready access to private capital markets. It helps ensure airports are able to fund critical projects that support aircraft operations including safety and security projects, runway and taxiway projects and other airfield maintenance. AIP is funded by the passengers who use the system for the purpose of ensuring safe and secure airport facilities. Thus, it is imperative that the program, which has been level funded since FY 2006, be fully funded in FY 2013.

AIP clearly meets the criteria of "investing in those areas critical to job creation and economic growth" discussed in Office of Management and Budget Director Lew's August 17 memo. In fact, I would encourage you to identify AIP as a "priority investment" given the program's excellent track record over the last two years in spurring economic growth and creating jobs in large and small communities.

According to both FAA and industry studies, the need for AIP far exceeds existing grants, therefore any proposed reductions to AIP funding will mean significant delays for vital safety, security and modernization projects, negatively impacting the traveling public and ultimately our national economy.

America's airports stand ready to work with you and our local communities in providing the safest and most efficient facilities for the traveling public. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Greg Principato
President
Airports Council International-North America