November 18, 2009

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary

As you prepare for the December 3 White House Forum on Jobs and Economic Growth, Airports Council International-North America (ACI-NA) urges you to include funding for airport infrastructure projects in your discussion as one way to help create jobs and promote economic growth. The improvement of airport infrastructure helps increase safety for the traveling public; is an investment in the future of our national transportation infrastructure system; and creates construction jobs today while paving the way for job creation in the future.

Many local communities have seen the positive affects of the $1.1 billion in Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding included in the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). Airports worked with the FAA to move the money from Washington to the local communities quickly using a process that is well known and understood, and one which provides clear guidelines. As you may recall, the FAA had, by June, reported that all but $5 million of the $1.1 billion appropriated had been authorized to 323 separate projects throughout the United States.

Earlier this year FAA officials noted that there were $3 billion in shovel-ready AIP projects that could be completed in two years. And the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) estimates between 2009 and 2013 there are $49.7 billion in airport development projects eligible for AIP grants.

Though the economic slowdown has impacted the entire aviation industry, airports continue to have a responsibility to maintain our facilities to meet passenger safety, security and capacity needs today as well as into the future. We are committed to making

the necessary infrastructure investments to prepare for the expected 25% growth in service that the FAA predicts our industry will face by 2021 when it is estimated that one billion people will take to the sky.

In addition to creating jobs today, further investment in airport infrastructure would allow the industry to take a step forward in preparing for NextGen, which begins and ends at the airport. As the Government Accountability Office noted in its September 2008 report, *Next Generation Air Transportation System: Status of Systems Acquisition and the Transition to the Next Generation Air Transportation System,* "With regard to airport infrastructure, a transition to NextGen will also depend on the ability of airports to handle greater capacity." The report states that airports will play a critical role in implementing infrastructure and procedural enhancements needed to meet identified capacity needs, such as runway and taxiway enhancements. Airports will also be on the front line in providing additional airport terminal and roadway capacity need to take full advantage of the airfield and airspace capacity increases NextGen will provide.

We ask that you consider including additional airport infrastructure funding as a way to continue to help create jobs and hasten our country's economic recovery.

Sincerely,

Greg Principato
President
Airports Council International-North America

CC: The Honorable John D. Rockefeller, IV
The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
The Honorable James Oberstar
The Honorable John Mica
The Honorable Susan Kurland, DOT
The Honorable Christa Fornarotto, DOT