



April 11, 2023

State of Nevada Assembly
Revenue Committee
Assemblywoman Shea Backus, Chair
2251 North Rampart Boulevard No. 587
Las Vegas, NV 89128-7640

RE: Assembly Bill No. 429

Dear Assemblywoman Shea Backus,

On behalf of the Nevada Aviation Association (NvAA) Board of Directors, I am expressing our support for Assembly Bill 429. I want to share with you the importance of aviation to our communities and the statewide economy. NvAA is an aviation industry advocate. NvAA advocates for maintaining and improving the statewide airport system and aeronautical operators across the Silver State.

In March 2022, the Nevada Department of Transportation released a study titled [The Nevada Airport and Heliport System Plan \(NAHSP\) NAHSP Executive Summary](#). This \$465,000 study of Nevada's airports included an economic impact study. Nevada aviation supports over 285,000 jobs statewide, generating \$12.1B in labor income and \$40B in additional economic output. The economic impact study did not calculate the impacts of military aviation and aeronautical activity not associated with an airport (i.e., aeronautical manufacturing or off-airport advanced air mobility (UAV) activity). The economic impact of Nellis Air Force Base and Fallon Naval Air Station adds another \$7B to the total aviation impact to the state's economy. Aviation's \$47B in economic impact is second only to gaming in terms of jobs and revenue generated. Imagine gaming in Nevada without aviation.

The NAHSP identified initiatives and investment needs for Nevada Airports. A 20-year estimate for statewide aviation needs is \$8.4B. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) establishes guidelines for managing and maintaining plans essential to airport development through the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) and the Airports Capital Improvement Plan (ACIP). Of Nevada's 49 airports, thirty-one airports are eligible for FAA ACIP grants.

A \$2M appropriation directed to the *Nevada Fund for Aviation* would leverage \$32M in FAA ACIP grants and support counties in meeting the required local matching funds. FAA grants provide 93.75 percent of each federal dollar awarded. The airport sponsor must produce the remaining 6.25 percent local match. Many rural Nevada counties are unable to make the local match. Therefore, many FAA grants are returned to the federal pool of funds. That \$32M in ACIP grants will return more money to state and local

economies through wages and sales taxes. Supporting the *Nevada Fund for Aviation* will go a long way toward preserving airport infrastructure, enhancing safety, fostering sustainability, transforming economies, connecting communities, and optimizing mobility.

These airport improvement projects include pavement maintenance, procurement of automated weather reporting equipment, modernizing airport fuel systems, and installing airport lighting for nighttime operations. Nevada airports connect statewide economies and provide access to healthcare. Doctors and nurses routinely travel from metro hospitals using rural community airports to provide critical access to clinical healthcare services and allow the emergency medical evacuation to major trauma centers.

Of the forty-nine public-use (local) airports and only three have scheduled commercial service (Las Vegas, Reno-Tahoe, and Elko). However, Elko is at risk of losing its last commercial flight in 2023.

Before the advent of trains, cars, and airplanes the state was much larger. Geographically, it is the same size, but it took longer to travel across the state. With each progression of development in modes of transportation, the state has become smaller in terms of time to travel across the state. Local airports are vital to the Nevada transportation network. Local airports improve transportation options by reducing travel times, improving travel flexibility, scheduling, enhancing the delivery of time-sensitive equipment, facilitating multiple-stop itineraries in a single day and often to towns and locations that would be inaccessible by commercial air service.

Commercial airline industry challenges are severely impacting northeastern Nevada residents and business partners. Elko residents and business travelers struggle with travel challenges when airlines change schedules on short notice. Elko's current flight schedule is limited to one flight per day. The nearest airport hub is over two hundred miles away. Residents and business partners either must drive over 3 hours to Salt Lake City, 5 hours to Reno or 7 hours to travel to Las Vegas. Elko's current flight is routed through Salt Lake City. Connecting flights from Salt Lake City can take as long, or longer, than the drive.

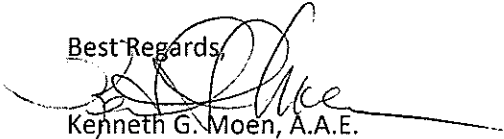
A \$10M appropriation over the next biennium will allow the ASDC to hire an executive director, commission staff, and stand-up an office. One of the first tasks the ASDC will need to complete is to commission a statewide air service development study and create a statewide air service strategic plan. This is not an Elko bill. There are other opportunities for commercial service in the state, including a route between Las Vegas and Carson City, primarily during the legislative session.

Time is money. A route between Las Vegas and Carson City could potentially save up to 5 hours of travel time for a typical day trip between Carson City and Las Vegas. This time savings calculation includes airport parking, TSA processing time, travel time between security and the gate area at Las Vegas/Reno airports and the drive time between Reno and the Legislature building. The Carson City Airport is less than 10 minutes from the Legislature building. This proposed route could operate from a fixed base operator as opposed to operating from the main airport terminal building allowing for airport passenger screening to be avoided altogether.

A mile of the road will take you one mile. A mile of runway will take you anywhere in the world. Appropriating \$10M to the ASDC and \$2M to the Nevada Fund for Aviation will increase economic activity, connect communities, maintain, and improve infrastructure, create jobs, and improve the state's transportation network.

For these reasons, the NvAA Board of Directors urges you to pass AB429 to ensure aviation remains available now and sustainable into the future.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Moen', written over the printed name.

Kenneth G. Moen, A.A.E.

President, Nevada Aviation Association