

# Airport Consultants Council

## Reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration

***Congress should resolve pending issues relating to the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization and pass a final bill this year.***

Legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is almost six months delayed. To date, airports have received three-fourths of their overall funding in FY 2008, and the current extension expires on June 30.

The reauthorization is currently mired in controversy over the future federal aviation financing system and other issues. Certainly these are important components of the reauthorization bill that must be resolved. However, if Congress does not act this year, the FAA reauthorization could be delayed well into next year since a new Administration will take office and new leadership at the U.S. Department of Transportation and the FAA will be appointed.

Why is completing a reauthorization bill this year important?

- Delays are impacting the FAA grant program. While short term extensions have been passed, it is extremely difficult for the FAA grant program to be administered in a rational way. Grant requests are difficult to administer through continuing resolutions.
- Delays raise the cost of projects and increase congestion at our airports. The stop/start nature of FAA funding availability has wrecked havoc on the implementation of airport improvement projects and has compromised the ability of airports to plan long-term design and construction programs. Plus, airports are losing as much as \$100 million per month from a potential increase in Passenger Facility Charges. This further compromises the ability of airports to increase capacity and ease delays on the traveling public.
- Construction seasons are at risk, particularly in the northern states. Since these states have shorter construction seasons due to the weather, they need to have grants administered in a timely fashion to ensure bids are let early in a calendar year. Delays in FAA funding compromise the ability of airport sponsors to release timely bids.
- The FAA reauthorization bill will stimulate the economy and create jobs. Congress is currently considering ways to jump start the economy. The FAA reauthorization bill provides an excellent vehicle to create well-paying jobs and also relieve congestion at our airports.

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### **Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Recommendations**

- Increase funding for the Airport Improvement Program by a minimum of \$100 million per year.
- Increase the cap on Passenger Facility Charges (PFCs) from the current level of \$4.50 to \$7.00.
- Extend the use of Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) to airport planning, architectural and engineering projects funded through Passenger Facility Charges (PFCs). QBS ensures the most qualified firms can compete and are selected for airport projects, which in turn results in the efficient use of taxpayer dollars, low overall lifecycle costs and successful project delivery.
- Oppose the diversion of AIP and other airport development/capital program funding for other purposes (such as FAA operations).
- Preserve budget point-of-order protections to ensure aviation funding is fully spent on the intended purposes.
- Treat security mandates as a national security matter funded by the Federal Government.
- Explore options to enhance alternative financing of airport projects, such as enhanced bonding authority, equity participation, and other funding alternatives.

***Founded in 1978, the Airport Consultants Council (ACC) is the international trade association that represents consulting firms and related businesses involved in the development and operations of airports and related facilities. Visit [www.ACOnline.org](http://www.ACOnline.org) for more information. Contact T.J. Schulz, ACC Vice President, at 703-683-5900 or [tjs@acconline.org](mailto:tjs@acconline.org)***