



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Karen Howard, Chair
Franklin Gomez Flores, Vice Chair
Mike Dasher
Diana Hales
Robert Logan

COUNTY MANAGER: Dan LaMontagne

July 18, 2022

Hon. Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Dept. of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590
United States

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to support a request from Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU) for \$275 million in federal funding to replace its primary commercial service runway, 5L-23R.

RDU is a critical driver of job creation, prosperity, and quality of life throughout North Carolina's Research Triangle region, and its economic footprint continues to grow. In particular, Chatham County continues to benefit from RDU's regional economic development impact, with multiple transformational economic development projects considering locating in Chatham as well as the already announced VinFast project that will be locating here. Without RDU, Chatham County's, and our region's, competitiveness in securing projects like VinFast would be significantly diminished.

Ongoing investments to improve this vital economic development infrastructure cannot be overstated. RDU's 25-year master plan calls for improvements to the airfield, terminals, ground transportation, and general aviation. The current cost estimate is \$3.5 billion due to accelerated growth in passenger traffic. In addition to replacing RDU's primary runway, RDU will need more terminal gates, roadway improvements, and a new consolidated rental car and ground transportation center.

Even with substantial local and airport fee increases and continued significant state legislative support, RDU will not be able to fund the overall capital infrastructure needs to meet the aviation demands of our growing region. Assistance from a federal partner will be essential. Without federal grant funding, RDU will exhaust its cash reserves and max out its bonding capacity at the end of a 10-year period, which will impact its ability to finance terminal expansion and dozens of other projects required to support our regional growth.

Accordingly, and on behalf of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners, I request that the FAA provide a letter of intent for a 75% federal grant in support of the total \$366 million project cost so RDU can continue to serve as an increasingly vital node in the national commercial aviation system and an economic engine for this state.

Thank you for considering this request and for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Karen Howard, Chair
Chatham County Board of Commissioners

Cc: Billy Nolen, Federal Aviation Administration Administrator
Shannetta R. Griffin, Federal Aviation Administration Associate Administrator for Airports
Chatham County Board of Commissioners
Dan LaMontagne, Chatham County Manager
Lindsay Ray, Clerk to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners