

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0908

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

March 9, 2022

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

The Honorable Stephen Dickson  
Administrator  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Secretary Buttigieg and Administrator Dickson:

As you distribute funds related to infrastructure projects around the United States, I write to urge the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to prioritize several critical projects at Florida airports.

As you know, Florida's airspace is among the busiest across our nation, and the state is home to dozens of airports with varying scopes of service. Our airports form an integral part of Florida's rapidly growing economy and, in particular, its robust tourism industry, which is well on its way to returning to its pre-COVID rate of attracting more than 130 million visitors – both domestic and international – each year. Furthermore, Florida is also the third most populous state in the country and continues to expand as hundreds of thousands of Americans choose to relocate to the state each year.

Given these factors, and the massive pressure that they present to our state transportation systems, ensuring that we meet the needs of Florida's airport infrastructure is paramount to maintain its safe, effective operation. However, I continue to hear from airports across the state about aging and outdated features, and the pressing need to upgrade, replace, and rebuild many important structures in Florida airports. Leadership teams at these airports have identified important projects that, if funded, will make flying safer for Floridians, airport employees, and the tens of millions of visitors to the Sunshine State each year.

As such, I have enclosed a list of high-priority projects at airports across the state and request that each receive fair and full consideration for funding opportunities as they become available. I look forward to working with you to ensure that traveling through Florida's airports remain a safe experience for residents, visitors and airport personnel.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator

## List of Critical Infrastructure Priorities for Florida Airport Projects

- Tampa International Airport (TPA): TPA is home to the second oldest air traffic control tower in the country. Given the aging status of the tower, I urge you to move the tower from the FAA's repair list to its replacement list. The Hillsborough County Aviation Authority, in conjunction with the FAA, has already identified a location for a new tower. Given the risk the current condition of the tower poses to the safety and security of TPA staff and travelers, this project is an obvious candidate for FAA funding. An additional project in need of funding at TPA is a new Airside.
- Tallahassee International Airport (TLH): TLH's Runway 18/36 is in poor condition and in need for rehabilitation. While Runway 18/36 is the most pressing project for the airport, TLH has identified other projects in need of funding, including Taxiway A (North) rehabilitation; air carrier apron rehabilitation; access road work; terminal central plant replacement; parking improvements; cargo ramp rehabilitation; north ramp pavement preservation and lighting; and other terminal improvements.
- Miami International Airport (MIA): MIA is considering several projects for upcoming funding opportunities, including design work on its South Terminal, construction for Concourse F refurbishment and a new checkpoint, checkpoint X-Ray equipment, and construction for Park 6.
- Orlando International Airport (MCO): Funding at MCO is needed for Phase 1 of terminal expansion on the south terminal. Given that this project is shovel ready, it is an obvious candidate for funding. Funding is also needed for apron expansion, and the airport's aging automatic people mover is in need of replacement.
- Central Florida TRACON: The TRACON is in need of funding for total reconstruction. The TRACON has not been renovated or replaced since its construction more than 40 years ago, and its aging physical structure will not be able to meet the growing needs of airports in the Orlando area.
- Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW): Given RSW's significant growth over the last year and a half, the airport is in need of funding for its gate expansion project, which adds a new 14-gate concourse. One additional project in need of funding is a Public Safety Facility, which would relocate the airport police department and security office to allow for a safer, more tactical response to security incidents.
- Palm Beach International Airport (PBI): There are several projects in need of funding at PBI, the largest being improvements to the central airfield. Additional projects include parking garage repairs, Taxiway R rehabilitation, projects related to security checkpoints and air cargo operations, and funding for the aircraft rescue and fire-fighting facility.
- Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP): Funding is needed for several projects, including expansion of the large aircraft parking apron and terminal apron, east airfield development, realignment of the terminal loop road, realignment of the terminal loop road, extension of John Reaver Road to accommodate the Florida National Guard relocation, rehabilitation of the West Bay Parkway, and vehicle parking phases 1 and 2.
- Pensacola International Airport (PNS): Funding for PNS is needed for expansion plans to include a larger passenger terminal facility, as well as a six-story parking garage. Given the current rate of travelers at the airport, PNS is currently operating beyond current design capabilities.

- Jacksonville International Airport (JAX): JAX is planning to develop Concourse B, which will include an expanded TSA screening area, by-pass taxiway, ramp enhancements, and a six-gate Concourse.
- Key West International Airport (EYW): Funding is needed at EYW for Concourse A and Terminal Improvements program. The Concourse A program will benefit the Florida Keys region, drive tourism, and create new jobs.
- Melbourne Orlando International Airport (MLB): Several projects at MLB are well-positioned to receive funding, including expansion of the existing terminal and fire sprinkler system and system upgrades to meet current building code requirements. Given increased operations and growth at the airport, other projects in need of funding include upgrades of HVAC and electrical distributions, replacing the flooring in the existing terminal, a new terminal gate addition, offices for administrative staff, and additional space for public safety and operations facilities.
- St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport (PIE): PIE is in particular need of federal funding to support its terminal expansion project, given its expanded airport operations.
- Treasure Coast International Airport (FPR): FPR requires funding for several important projects, including Phase II of its Airport West Commerce Park, which will allow service expansions and increased manufacturing and assembly operations, as well as taxiway and runway extensions.
- Avon Park Executive Airport (AVO): Funding is needed at AVO for a large expansion of the airport and airport services, including military C-130 applications and aircraft biofuel research. The project would create hangars and research facilities on-site and include both military and civilian applications.
- Miami Executive Airport (TMB): Funding at TMB is needed for a new Air Traffic Control Tower.
- Page Field (FMY): Funding at FMY is needed to replace the airport's tower, which is more than 50 years old and is becoming run down.
- Gainesville Regional Airport (GNV): Funding is needed for phase 1 construction to rehabilitate and partially reconstruct the general aviation side aircraft aprons. This would rehabilitate existing public parking areas for general aviation jet and propeller aircraft. Funding is also needed to rehabilitate and reconfigure Taxiway A to meet current FAA design standards. Additionally, funding is needed to replace the Air Traffic Control Tower due to age and the tower's low height, which restricts future hangar development due to line of sight issues.
- Northeast Florida Regional Airport (SGJ/UST): SGJ is currently working to attain the most appropriate National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems categorization. The airport's activity level is much higher than other airports assigned to the GA-Basic category to which SGJ currently is assigned. Especially with commercial air service resumed as of November 2021, SGJ's request to be reclassified to P-National would benefit the airport in receiving funding allocations commensurate with its current operations. SGJ is also looking for funding for its project to enhance airport security by replacing and upgrading fencing, gates, and access control radar.
- Vero Beach Regional Airport (VRB): Funding is needed for several projects at VRB, including a fiber telecommunications backbone project that would upgrade telecommunications equipment to meet current standards; upgrades to the airport's Stormwater Masterplan to meet current needs; airfield lighting improvements to improve

safety of airfield navigation; and aviation BLVD widening to meet increasing traffic demands.

- Witham Field Airport (SUA): Federal funding is needed for several projects at Witham Field, including installation of weather-reporting equipment, design and construction phases of replacing and restriping Taxiway A, and airport security fencing and gates.
- Okeechobee County Airport (OBE): Funding is needed at OBE for development of additional T-Hangers to meet the airport's growing need for private aircraft storage; design and rehabilitation of the poor condition of Runway 14/32; an ecological study for a Wildlife Hazard Management Plan; the design of a Master Drainage Plan design and implementation; Taxiway B realignment; apron expansion; runway 5/23 extension environmental analysis; land acquisition; and general design.
- Lake City Gateway Airport (LCQ): LCQ is in need of funding for projects to address widespread storm water damage adversely impacting the Airport roadways and exacerbating flooding events, including inspections, assessment scans, storm water drain repairs, as well as replacement of collapsed headwalls, concrete pipes, roadway stabilization, and asphalt.
- Kissimmee Gateway Airport (ISM): ISM has been in need of a new contract tower for years and is positioned to qualify for FAA funding.
- Sarasota-Bradenton International (SRQ): Funding is needed for several projects at the airport, including a 5-gate expansion and consolidated in-line checked baggage inspection.
- North Palm Beach County General Aviation Airport (F45): Funding is needed for Runway 12-32 expansion and air traffic control tower, as well as for Runway 9R-27L.
- Palm Beach County Park Airport (LNA): Funding is needed for Taxiway D relocation and Runway 4-22
- Palm Beach County Glades Airport (PHK): Funding is needed for fuel farm improvements.