PROVIDE ROBUST AVIATION FUNDING

The COVID relief packages and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided much needed funding for airports, but further support is needed to not only update existing infrastructure but upgrade that infrastructure to take advantage of new aeronautical technologies that will keep the United States in the forefront of global aviation. NASAO urges Congress to provide robust aviation funding by:

- Increasing Airport Improvement Program (AIP) investment by $250 million to $3.6 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 and incrementally increasing that amount to $4 billion over the course of five years; and

- Appropriate the full amounts authorized in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-254) for the supplemental discretionary airport infrastructure grants for AIP (starting at $1.02 billion in FY 2019 and increasing each year to $1.11 billion in FY 2023) and ensure 50 percent of funds are used for non-hub and small hub airports and general aviation airports as directed in P.L. 115-254.

- Raising and indexing the $4.50 Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) Cap.

Additionally, NASAO supports reforms not addressed in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-254). This includes protecting FAA from future Federal Government shutdowns and increasing investments for aviation workforce development initiatives, including more avenues for pilots to gain credit toward airline transport pilot (ATP) certification.

CONTINUE SUPPORT OF COVID-19 RECOVERY

NASAO urges Congress to increase the Federal share of AIP funds to 95 percent for FY 2023. Federal aid to the states to support state aviation agencies during the pandemic has been vital to ensuring that many state aviation programs continue to fulfill their important role in the safety and efficiency of the National Aviation System. With the significant decline in state and local aviation excise taxes and fees due to the pandemic, many State aviation agencies and local airport sponsors continue to struggle to provide the traditional 10 percent non-Federal share of AIP projects. Increasing the Federal share would ensure the ability of State aviation agencies and local airport sponsors to expend AIP funds and expedite the recovery process.

As Congress considers future appropriations, NASAO urges Congress to apportion AIP funding based on airports’ calendar year 2019 or 2020 or 2021 passenger enplanements, whichever is highest, for FY 2023 to 2026. This would ensure that airports continue to remain eligible for AIP and are able to fund critical airport safety projects during the pandemic.

MODERNIZE NON-PRIMARY ENTITLEMENT (NPE) PROGRAM

The NPE program must be reformed to better meet the needs and realities of nonprimary airports. The NPE program provides up to $150,000 annually from AIP to general aviation, reliever, and non-primary commercial service airports. However, NPE grants must be carried over for a period of years to provide adequate funding for most airport improvement projects. NASAO seeks to work with Congress and the FAA in the upcoming FAA Reauthorization on developing a common vision on reforms to make the NPE program more useful and effective.

ENSURE AIR SERVICE TO SMALL COMMUNITIES

NASAO maintains support for fully funding the Essential Air Service (EAS) Program, the Small Community Air Service Program (SCASp), the Federal Contract Tower (FCT) Program, and the Military Airport Program (MAP). These programs are critical to aviation safety and ensuring small communities maintain commercial air service.

NASAO also supports allowing communities that successfully exited EAS and were then locked out of EAS due to provisions in the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-95) to rejoin the program to help restore scheduled air service that has been reduced or suspended as a result of the pandemic. Allowing these communities to be eligible to receive EAS assistance would ensure they continue to have access to the national air transportation system.
PREPARE FOR NEW ERA OF AVIATION

America’s airports of all types can and should be part of addressing environmental concerns and achieving sustainable operations. New technologies are critical to achieving this goal, and Congress should fund and encourage development of these solutions. NASAO urges Congress to:

- **Direct the FAA to establish an outline for a constructive Federal regulatory framework for drone integration strategies** that supports the application of a low-altitude drone activity and require the FAA to work collaboratively with states to develop an acceptable framework.

- **Establish a national standard to address Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) airspace coordination and control** informed by the ongoing work of the Advanced Aviation Advisory Committee, an aviation stakeholder led advisory committee that provides advice and recommendations to the FAA on UAS and AAM integration issues. Allowing for third party providers operating under the guidance of the FAA and the established standards would enable the federated system to expand more rapidly as AAM aircraft become certified while maintaining the appropriate level of safety.

- **Direct FAA to provide states with baseline standards to assist with the infrastructure planning requirements to accommodate AAM**, such as electrical requirements, charging standards, and vertiport design criteria. Planning that could be accomplished now at airports and within communities will help speed up the incorporation of AAM aircraft as they become available.

- **Direct FAA to develop plans and policies and identify how to make federal funding available to support both on and off airport development for AAM**. With both electric and hydrogen propelled aircraft in development, it is critical that the FAA start planning how it will support airports and off airport transportation nodes with these new infrastructure needs.

- **Establish a sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) blenders tax credit to incentivize the production and distribution of SAF**. SAF is a viable bridging strategy between the current combustion engine technology and that of future aircraft propulsion systems. Jet aircraft assembled today are likely to be in use for the next 20 years while commercial air passenger and air cargo demand are forecasted to continue to climb well beyond 2019 levels. In order to reduce emissions while increasing capacity to meet the demand, aviation needs SAF in meaningful amounts to augment or replace Jet A fuel.

PROVIDE FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR PFAS CLEAN-UP EFFORTS AT AIRPORTS

NASAO urges Congress and the FAA to swiftly implement federally assisted clean-up programs for PFAS contamination at airports stemming from FAA-required use of firefighting foams containing PFAS. While some progress has been made in identifying PFAS as an emerging contaminant, direct Federal support of airports (separate from the Airport Improvement Program) is needed to accelerate the clean-up process at contaminated sites. Not only are airports being faced with difficult choices when called upon to extinguish fires using the only FAA-approved firefighting foams, airports are now subject to environmental enforcement actions in many states, harming the viability of the national transportation system. Airports should not be held liable for PFAS contamination as a result of complying with a Federal requirement. In addition to federally funded clean-up programs of airports, NASAO urges policymakers to review and provide liability protections for all airports faced with this challenge.

ENHANCE STATE BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

NASAO seeks to work with Congress and the FAA to enhance State Block Grant Program (SBGP) operations by strengthening SBGP program and policy implementation. Block Grant States (BGS) play a critical role in the development and maintenance of airport infrastructure on behalf of the FAA for eligible airports within their states. NASAO believes it is critical for the FAA to work more collaboratively with the BGS in addressing current and future program needs.