

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-Pa.-9) introduced an FAA reauthorization bill – the 21st Century Aviation Innovation, Reform, and Reauthorization Act (the 21st Century AIRR Act). NATCA worked closely with the Chairman and his staff as they developed the bill. The 21st Century AIRR Act is substantively similar to the AIRR Act of 2016 that our Union supported because it met our Four Core Principles for Reform.

NATCA reviewed every word and detail of the 21st Century AIRR Act. After extremely careful review, consideration, and deliberation, we have reached a decision: NATCA supports this bill.

Our Union has been focused on providing a stable, predictable funding stream to operate and improve the National Airspace System (NAS). To get NATCA's support, any ATC reform legislation must, at a minimum, meet our Four Core Principles:

- Protect the men and women who ensure the safety and efficiency of the NAS in their employment relationship, including their rights and benefits;
- Maintain safety and efficiency as the top priorities;
- Provide a stable, predictable funding stream that adequately supports air traffic control services, staffing, hiring and training, long-term modernization, preventative maintenance, and ongoing modernization of the physical infrastructure; and
- Ensure continued service to all segments of our nation's diverse aviation community.

It is essential that any proposed legislation not harm NATCA's members. This bill protects our workforce – including pay, benefits, retirement, and collective bargaining rights. If this bill, as written today, becomes law, employees will be kept whole.

We made sure that we clearly understood how this bill would protect the NAS and allow it to continue to grow, as well as how it would protect the men and women who are the backbone of the system. We assure you that we treated this decision with extraordinary care.

Like last year's bill, this legislation proposes a federally-chartered, not-for-profit corporation to operate the NAS. We would vigorously oppose a for-profit model, and this would NOT be a for-profit model. While the media and others discussing this issue have characterized this legislation as a "privatization bill," to us, privatization has always been synonymous with a profit motive where safety and efficiency are not the top priorities. That definition does NOT fit this bill today. We support this bill because it does make safety and efficiency the top priorities.

We applaud the hard work that the Committee has done to develop this proposal. The legislation currently addresses NATCA's primary issues of concern.

As we told you on June 7, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Ranking Member Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.-4) proposed an alternate model for ensuring a stable, predictable funding stream for the FAA, while at the same time protecting employees and ensuring the safety of the NAS. That legislation, if enacted, would provide a stable, predictable funding stream for the NAS by taking the Airport and Airway Trust Fund "off budget." Specifically, Ranking Member DeFazio's bill would exempt the Trust Fund's uncommitted cash balance from the Congressional budget process, sequestration, and directives issued by the Office of Management and Budget. The bill also would authorize the uncommitted Trust Fund balance to be used for rebuilding and modernizing air traffic control facilities.

We appreciate the effort that Ranking Member DeFazio and his staff made. After careful review, we also support the provisions of that bill. However, after introduction of his bill, Ranking Member DeFazio conceded that, "[it] likely will face some opposition from [House] appropriation leaders, who in the past have criticized 'off budget proposals.'" Although the bill was co-sponsored by all of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's minority members, it would seem to have little chance on a committee where the chairman has now introduced his own bill.

We also anticipate that the Senate Commerce Committee will introduce its own FAA reauthorization bill in the coming days. That bill will likely be different than both the Chairman's and Ranking Member's bills. As we have discussed the subject with Senate staff we have learned, and media reports confirm, it will not contain a package to significantly overhaul air traffic control.

Today is only the beginning stage of a legislative process with many steps. As you all know, the language in proposed legislation is often changed or amended throughout the legislative process. We will continue to track this bill to vigorously and carefully review how it would affect our members and the NAS. If, and when, there are changes to this legislation, we will review them to ensure that it continues to fully align with our organization's policies, practices, and core principles. We reserve the right to withhold our support if any change causes the bill to violate our core principles.

We will continue to keep you informed on all developments as the ATC reform discussion progresses.

In solidarity,

The NATCA National Executive Board