

**Written Testimony of Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Meredith Biggica, Deputy Secretary for Multimodal
Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee
Public Hearing on Commonwealth Aircraft Operations
June 23, 2025**

Chairs Coleman and Tartaglione, Chairs Ward and Flynn, Chairs Laughlin and Fontana, and members of the Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee, I am Meredith Biggica, Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). Our teams have dedicated countless hours over the past weeks compiling information you have requested regarding the state's aircraft and its operations, and I welcome the opportunity to clarify any inquiries that may remain.

PennDOT is responsible for the safe and responsible operation of all modes of transportation in the Commonwealth, relied upon by 13 million Pennsylvanians. Our responsibilities are critical and vast, and our professionals are committed to the provision of safe, responsible, quality travel infrastructure, and operations.

Relevant to the Multimodal Deputate, my team is responsible for Pennsylvania's ports, rail, public transit, pedalcycles, pedestrian needs and most airports, excluding international airports. The Bureau of Aviation is one of the divisions within the Multimodal Deputate.

PennDOT's Bureau of Aviation (Bureau) is headed by Mr. Tony McCloskey, who works closely with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Pennsylvania airports. The Bureau licenses 500+ airports and heliports. The Bureau works with 40 airports eligible to pursue available funding to invest in capital improvements, many of which are safety-related, through the FAA's State Block Grant Program. And based on authority granted by the General Assembly, the Bureau is charged with the daily oversight and operation of the PennDOT aircraft and our Flight Operations Division.

The Flight Operations Division used to operate several aircraft, but at present, PennDOT's American-made turboprop *King Air 350i* is the sole aircraft. It is operated under Part 91 of FAA's regulations, and the focus of today's hearing. Our four-pilot crew flew 142 flights in 2023, 141 flights in 2024, and 67 flights to-date in 2025. Our responsibility is to provide safe air transportation services, as requested by the Governor and his Cabinet members and leaders, Row Offices, and the General Assembly, who, like PennDOT, are responsible, entrusted stewards of all state assets, programs, and taxpayer dollars. PennDOT takes these responsibilities seriously.

PennDOT's Bureau of Aviation team has successfully built and sustained meaningful partnerships with the FAA, including their Harrisburg District Office staff at HIA, with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, the Aviation Council of Pennsylvania, the Aviation Advisory Committee, Pennsylvania's Drone Association, the Pennsylvania Senate Aviation Caucus, the National Association of State Aviation Officials (which Pennsylvania chaired in 2022), Aerium, all of Pennsylvania's airports and heliports, and the aviation consultant community--all invaluable to our ongoing endeavors.

Airports generate economic impact in a multitude of ways. According to a 2022 study, the state's public-use aviation facilities provided an annual economic impact of \$34.1 billion to the Commonwealth. This industry supports more than 200,000 jobs, making it one of the largest employment sectors in Pennsylvania.