

**Southwest Airlines Co.**

David Richardson  
Senior Director, Governmental Affairs  
(202) 263-6287  
david.richardson@wnco.com



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The Honorable Delores Kelley  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

SENATE BILL 658 – TRANSPORTATION – MARYLAND AVIATION INFRASTRUCTURE  
IMPACTS COMMISSION - TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION

Dear Chair Kelley and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Southwest Airlines, I submit the following comments with respect to Senate Bill 658 (Maryland Aviation Infrastructure Impacts Commission). Respectfully, SB 658 would create an unnecessary and duplicative layer of review, which could undermine the future success of BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI Marshall), which is presently one of Maryland's greatest economic engines.

State-funded capital projects go through a vigorous review process, including complying with federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations, and vetting and ultimate approval by the democratically-elected General Assembly and the Board of Public Works (BPW). The State of Maryland's senior elected and appointed leaders consider multiple factors concerning whether the state should fund or otherwise support a major capital project. We believe the current structure of checks and balances is sufficient and works well. SB 658, however, would unnecessarily add an additional layer of bureaucracy that could delay important projects that benefit the State of Maryland and its citizens.

Furthermore, concerning aircraft noise specifically, BWI Marshall already has a citizen-led Community Roundtable, which already provides its feedback to the General Assembly, as well as other state, local, and federal policymakers. Having a second advisory body with almost an identical purpose would serve little to no purpose. It is important to note that Southwest has worked with the Community Roundtable, as well as the State of Maryland, to explore proposed flight procedure changes, which we have jointly presented to the FAA for its consideration and we're open to further changes so long as it does not undermine the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the air traffic control system. We believe it was the FAA's changes to arrival and departure procedures at BWI Marshall in 2015 – not any infrastructure projects at BWI Marshall – that led to the increase in community noise concerns.

Importantly, BWI Marshall serves the citizens of every county in Maryland. This includes (1) citizens who work at BWI Marshall, including Southwest's 4,200 Employees; (2) millions of airline consumers from Maryland who rely on BWI Marshall's easy come, easy go conveniences and the affordable travel options provided by Southwest and our competitors; (3) Maryland taxpayers who benefit from the economic activity and tax revenues generated from businesses based at or use the airport; and (4) off-site business – including hotels, restaurants, museums, etc. – that rely on flights carrying passengers and cargo between Maryland and points throughout the United States and beyond.

These citizens of Maryland come from every part of the state, all of whom directly benefit from having a safe, reliable and economically vibrant airport. As currently drafted, the legislation gives these citizens no voice in the proposed commission's activities because membership on the commission is limited to only four jurisdictions. Thus, the proposed commission would not represent all Marylanders (only a relatively few) and fails to give adequate consideration of BWI Marshall's vast economic and consumer benefits.

In closing, Southwest is proud to be Maryland's leading airline for the past 28 years. During that time, leaders across the state have enabled BWI Marshall to become a safe, reliable, efficient, and ultimately successful international airport. On behalf of Southwest, we are truly grateful for the Maryland General Assembly's commitment to helping BWI Marshall remain a world class airport for all those who use it and/or rely on it for their livelihoods.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of Southwest's views concerning SB 658.

Sincerely,



David Richardson