



February 1, 2023

The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis MD 21401

***Re: Opposition to SB 162 – Maryland Aviation Commission - Duties, Composition, and Member Orientation***

Dear Chair Griffith and Committee Members:

The BWI Business Partnership (the Partnership) writes to express our opposition to **Senate Bill 162 – Maryland Aviation Commission - Duties, Composition, and Member Orientation**. The BWI Business Partnership is a nonprofit corporation comprised of governmental organizations, private businesses, and academic institutions, advocating for strong transportation policy and initiatives, driving sustainable economic and workforce development, and facilitating meaningful strategic relationships germane to the growth and development of the BWI Region.

Senate Bill 162 alters the duties and composition of the Maryland Aviation Commission (the Commission) which is the statutory body charged with creating policy, regulations, and airport policy for Maryland’s state-owned airports. The bill’s provisions require the Commission to focus equally on:

- its established duty to adopt policies to improve and promote the role of the Baltimore–Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI Marshall Airport) as an airport of service to the Washington–Baltimore metropolitan area, and
- the new specific duty to adopt policies to mitigate negative health and community impacts of the airport and its industries.

The bill also requires that four of the governor’s eight gubernatorial appointees to the commission (the ninth member is the Secretary of Transportation, who serves as chair) to be selected from a list designated by a workgroup that was formed by the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Aviation Administration (MDOT MAA) in 2017 at the request of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to provide feedback and recommendations on the implementation of the FAA’s NextGen plans, particularly as it relates to noise disturbances. The FAA’s NextGen efforts are mandated by Congress and include a multi-faceted series of interlinked programs including policies, procedures, technologies, systems, and infrastructure.

MDOT MAA continues to work with the citizen workgroup to advance a series of proposed revisions to the FAA’s published flight procedures. The FAA responded to the proposed revisions with a formal review and issued findings in 2022. The next step is for the FAA to initiate an environmental review process for the proposed procedure changes. MDOT MAA is



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pressing the FAA to include multiple opportunities for public education and comment during this process.

The Partnership recognizes that some members of the community are annoyed by aircraft noise, particularly after flight shifts resulting from the NextGen initiative. According to MAA MDOT statistics, in 2021 there were over 620,000 complaints from 520 unique complainants in the BWI region of 2.8 million residents.

We want to highlight MDOT MAA's work to minimize and mitigate the noise issue. The agency addresses aircraft noise annoyance through mitigation programs, active public engagement and transparent long-term planning. MDOT MAA sponsors public outreach, supports the noise-related citizen workgroup (the DC Metroplex BWI Community Roundtable), operates the MDOT MAA Noise and Operations Monitoring System, manages the Residential Sound Insulation Program, conducts Airport Noise Zone and Part 150 Noise Studies, and completes proactive facility planning through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The Commission has a responsibility to examine and make legislative and regulatory recommendations on a number of issues related to the operations of BWI and Martin State Airport. In addition to noise, the Commission looks at environmental issues, service and cargo capacity, facility adequacy, and ADA compliance, all while adhering to FAA rules and requirements. The Partnership is concerned that this statutory elevation of noise over all other issues will inhibit progress on airport improvements unrelated to the noise issue, such as concourse improvements, the baggage handling system, and a new control tower. These planned improvements are vital to the economic competitiveness of the airport, the region, and the state of Maryland.

Based on economic data from Calendar Year (CY) 2017, BWI Marshall Airport supports 106,488 total jobs in the regional economy. Further, the airport produces \$4.1 billion in personal wages and is responsible for \$9.3 billion in business revenue for the state. The overall activity at BWI Marshall Airport produces an estimated \$579 million in tax revenue for state and local governments.

BWI Marshall is a vital component of the State's economy. Senate Bill 162 will divert the Commission's focus from its responsibility to improve and promote BWI Marshall Airport in the metropolitan region and threatens future improvements. The Partnership respectfully requests the committee report Senate Bill 162 unfavorably.

Sincerely,

Gina Stewart  
The BWI Business Partnership  
Executive Director