Dear [RTA member],

Thank you for your interest in helping our region thrive. One of our greatest assets is the Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU), governed by the RDU Airport Authority.

The RDU Airport Authority has developed an array of facilities to meet our region’s commercial air service needs since RDU opened in 1943. But today, RDU faces significant capital infrastructure funding challenges.

The Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA), the voice of the regional business community on transportation, released a report ([www.letsgetmoving.org/RDUAID](http://www.letsgetmoving.org/RDUAID)) in July 2021 that examines these capital funding challenges and provides recommendations for addressing them. One of the primary challenges addressed is the need for the replacement and relocation of the primary runway 5L-23R at RDU.

RTA, Research Triangle Park (RTP), Triangle-J Council of Governments (TJCOG), and RDU leadership are all focused on federal support for the runway as the most urgent funding opportunity, with a significant potential benefit for the national commercial aviation system. We believe that a focused, private-public awareness and lobbying effort leading up to the completion of the runway’s Environmental Assessment later in 2022 will maximize our opportunity for success.

**We are asking you to join us in this regionwide campaign by sending a support letter to the U.S. Department of Transportation, requesting federal funding to replace the primary runway at RDU International Airport.**

 On the next page you will find a simplified support letter template.

 Please mail one signed hard copy on your letterhead of your completed letter to the following address:

 Hon. Pete Buttigieg

Secretary

U.S. Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E

Washington, DC 20590

 Also, please scan a copy of your letter, and then attach that letter to an email sent to the following:

 TO: (USDOT) DOTExecSec@dot.gov

 CC: billy.nolen@faa.gov

 Shannetta.R.Griffin@faa.gov

BCC: RDUletter@tjcog.org

*NOTE: Your email can be the text of your letter. Attach your signed hardcopy to the e-mail.*

Thank you for your membership in RTA, and for your partnership in this effort. If you have questions, please contact me at 919.389.9285 or joe@letsgetmoving.org

Sincerely,

Joe Milazzo II, PE
RTA Executive Director

***SUPPORT LETTER TEMPLATE – see also sample talking points pool, lists A and B, on next page***

>>> BEGIN SAMPLE LETTER TEXT <<<

Month XX, 2022

Hon. Pete Buttigieg

Secretary

U.S. Dept. of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Ave, SE

Washington, DC 20590

United States

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to support a request from Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU) for $275m in federal funding to replace and relocate its primary commercial service runway, 5L-23R.

*[Paragraph 2: highlight importance of RDU to your company, organization, community, or county in 1-3 sentences]*

*[Paragraph 3: using bullets from List A on next page as a starting point, discuss one or more key airport needs that affect our region]*

*[Optional Paragraph 4: using bullets from List B on next page as a starting point, include comment about urgency of funding needs request]*

We request that FAA provide a letter of intent for a 75% federal grant in support of the total $366 million project cost so RDU can continue to serve as an increasingly vital node in the national commercial aviation system and an economic engine for this state.

*[optionally add closing along lines of “Thank you for considering this…”, “Thank you for your leadership”, etc.]*

Sincerely,

NAME

TITLE

COMPANY

cc:

Billy Nolen

Shannetta R. Griffin

>>> END SAMPLE LETTER TEXT <<<

***SAMPLE TALKING POINTS POOL for support letter template – see page 1 for suggested insertion points***

**List A – RDU Airport’s Impacts on our Region**  *(insert or adapt one or more of these into paragraph 3)*

* RDU is a critical driver of job creation, prosperity and quality of life throughout North Carolina’s Research Triangle region, and its economic footprint continues to grow.
* RDU generates an estimated $15.1 billion annual economic impact for the region and supports nearly 100,000 local and regional jobs.
* Prior to the pandemic, RDU Airport experienced four consecutive years of record-breaking passenger volumes, with more than 14 million people flying through RDU in 2019.
* 2019 air passenger levels were equivalent to projected 2031 levels.
* The Research Triangle area (Raleigh, Durham, and environs) is among the fastest-growing in the US.
* Identifying sustainable funding for essential growth at RDU Airport is the top priority of North Carolina’s Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA), the voice of the regional business community on transportation serving the Research Triangle region – one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the nation.
* The Triangle region grew by more than 377,000 people between 2010 and 2020, with four of our seven counties ranking in the top ten fastest growing counties in the state during this time.
* Population projections expect an additional 1.4 million residents to move to our region by 2050, an 85% increase from 2010.

**List B – Urgency of Funding Needs** *(optionally insert or adapt one or more of these into paragraph 4)*

* RDU’s 25-year master plan calls for improvements to the airfield, terminals, ground transportation, and general aviation. The current cost estimate is $3.5 billion due to accelerated growth in passenger traffic.
* In addition to replacing RDU’s primary runway, RDU will need more terminal gates, roadway improvements, and a new consolidated rental car and ground transportation center.
* RDU’s primary commercial runway is near its end-of-life due to pavement deterioration and its replacement and relocation is RDU’s most critical project.
* RDU needs additional federal grant funding to help pay for the $366 million project to keep the runway in operation and allow for terminal gate expansion.
* RDU’s master plan calls for the purposeful development of the airport campus, including the relocation of the primary runway to the west, which will enable capacity expansion of main RDU terminal 2.
* Even with substantial local and airport fee increases and continued, significant state legislative support, RDU will not be able to fund the overall capital infrastructure needed to support the aviation demands of our growing region. Assistance from a federal partner will be essential.
* RTA created the Airport Infrastructure Development task force to identify a stable financial footing for RDU. The task force’s most urgent recommendation is securing federal funds for replacement of RDU’s main runway.
* Most medium hub airports keep only a fraction of the entitlement funding they generate. In fact, RDU is required to return 75% of its entitlements – $7 million annually, or a total of $75 million since 2010.
* Prior to the pandemic, RDU historically received only 7.2 cents in federal funding for every dollar of tax paid by RDU passengers into the Airport and Airway Trust Fund (AATF).
* Without federal grant funding, RDU will exhaust its cash reserves and max out its bonding capacity at the end of a 10-year period, which will impact its ability to finance terminal expansion and dozens of other projects required to support regional growth.
* Even with federal assistance for the runway, the 25-year master plan anticipates a nearly $500 million shortfall in the $1.8 billion capital program, and that assumes the issuance of $550 million in new debt.
* In spring 2022 FAA approved an expanded length for the future relocated runway to 10,639 feet to facilitate passenger and cargo travel to the west coast from RDU.