



Las Vegas • McCarran International Airport

NEWS RELEASE

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Clark County Department of Aviation supports Congressional efforts to pass FAA reauthorization

Thousands of Nevada jobs, billions of dollars in future commerce, and most importantly, the ongoing safety of countless travelers are now awaiting action from those on Capitol Hill, the Clark County Department of Aviation strongly urges members of the U.S. House and Senate to make the Federal Aviation Administration's reauthorization a key priority in the early stages of the 112th Congress.

"The FAA's funding authorization ended in mid-2007, and since that time this critical federal agency has been asked to limp forward by way of 18 temporary extensions," said Clark County Aviation Director Randall H. Walker. "Aircraft are still controlled by a system that dates back to the World War II era. The public needs Congress to take action now so the FAA can begin to bring our country's aviation system into the 21st century. With skilled people looking for employment, and demand for aviation currently lower than it's been in decades due to the slowed economy, there truly is no better time than now to begin the modernizations the FAA will undoubtedly need once demand for air service inevitably rises. Our Department is thankful that Sen. Harry Reid has brought FAA reauthorization closer to resolution on the Senate Floor, and we urge his colleagues in Washington to quickly resolve this important matter."

A modern and efficient McCarran International Airport is the cornerstone of the Las Vegas economy. In Las Vegas, nearly 110,000 passengers pass through McCarran on a daily basis. It's the nation's seventh-busiest airport, serving as a gateway to close to half of the nearly 40 million travelers who visit here each year. Nearly 18,000 people are directly employed at the airport, though hundreds of thousands of other local workers and their employers directly and indirectly benefit from the billions of dollars air travelers spend here each year.

Senate Bill 223, which calls for FAA reauthorization, was introduced last week and is important to Clark County for numerous reasons. Its passage would generate jobs and economic activity throughout the Las Vegas Valley, and would extend the federal government's Airport Improvement Program, which annually provides millions of dollars in federal grant money to airports used to improve safety and overall capacity.

Through its "NextGen" initiative, FAA reauthorization would accelerate improvements to the nation's air traffic control system, thereby reducing delays, increasing safety and maximizing the air space capacity of McCarran, and other airports around the country that support travelers' ability to easily fly to and from Las Vegas. At its most basic level, NextGen represents a wide-ranging transformation of the National Airspace System from the current 70-year-old, ground-based system of air traffic control to a satellite-based system of air traffic management. This evolution is vital to meeting future demand, and to avoiding gridlock in the sky and at our nation's airports. The FAA believes NextGen will open America's skies to continued growth and increased safety while reducing aviation's environmental impact.



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