

October 22, 2020

Jennifer Solomon
Eastern Region Regional Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
1 Aviation Plaza
Jamaica, NY 11434-4809

Dear Ms. Solomon,

I write to you on behalf of North Central West Virginia Airport (CKB) in Harrison County, WV. North Central West Virginia Airport recently submitted an application for an Environmental Assessment (EA) of an ambitious project to develop land for the Airport's future terminal along with the creation of an AeroTech Park.

The North Central WV Airport's infrastructure project will transform the land surrounding the airport, positioning it as a transportation hub for the entire region and building on the airport's impressive growth in recent years. The master plan for the overall project consists of two phases. The first phase consists of the construction of a new terminal with access to Interstate 279, capable of supporting the airport and the area for the next 50 years. It will also include a new parking facility. The second phase will consist of the construction of a 100-acre AeroTech Park with direct access to the airport's 7,800-foot runway – the longest in the state. This will build on existing industry near the airport, including some of the nation's most impressive aerospace and defense companies, such as Mitsubishi, Pratt & Whitney, Aurora Flight Sciences, and Lockheed Martin. According to a study completed in 2019, the airport has an annual economic impact of \$1.1 billion. Future development of the AeroTech Park is estimated to double the economic impact to over \$2.0 billion and create more than 1,000 jobs.

Unfortunately, the approval process for this project has seen considerable delays, and the airport has been forced to resubmit its application for an EA more than five times. During the unprecedented health crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is understandable that delays will arise as agencies and offices struggle to find equilibrium as many employees continue to work from home and lines of communication are more difficult. However, continued delays could place the project in jeopardy and lead to significant financial issues at the airport. I am heartened that officials at the airport believe the most recent submission has resolved previous issues the FAA has identified. It is also my understanding that because the project is a significant distance from the runway and is situated on land that has already been disturbed or used for other purposes, the airport does not anticipate the project will impact any streams or wetlands or create any safety risks.

I greatly value the work that the FAA does, day in and day out, to keep passengers and air cargo safe. Mitigating environmental risks and ensuring the safety of passengers, employees, and workers is paramount for the approval of any project, and I appreciate the meticulous approach taken by the FAA when reviewing projects of this size and scope. It is critical to get infrastructure projects right the first time, and to take the time necessary in order to do so. In this case, given the significant delays this project has already undergone, I am requesting that the Eastern Region of the FAA to provide an expeditious response to the airport submission and work closely with the airport to identify and resolve any remaining issues so that this project can move forward.

The project is critical to ensuring the future success of North Central West Virginia Airport and the State of West Virginia. I am hopeful that the FAA can work with the North Central Airport in an expeditious manner to complete this process quickly, while meeting all safety and environmental requirements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III", written over a horizontal line.

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator