

March 10, 2023

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chair, Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen,

The undersigned organizations represent construction contractors, manufacturers, distributors and other service providers, labor unions and other entities engaged in underground construction of underground facilities, including utilities located in America's airports. As the 118th Congress begins its work in earnest, we write to encourage you and others on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to make reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the overall federal aviation system a priority for the committee.

Enacted in 2018, the last FAA measure represented the first multi-year reauthorization since 2012, relieving FAA of the uncertainty associated with repeated short-term extensions and authorizing funding needed to make sound, long-term investments for airport infrastructure, including improvements to underground utilities and other facilities needed for airports to operate safely and effectively. Although much attention has been on recent breakdowns in service by several airlines in recent years, the need to address dilapidated underground infrastructure at American airports remain.

Critical Underground Infrastructure

Airports efficiently move people and cargo, support commercial activity and economic development, Airports provide the commercial and general aviation the backbone that connects communities and people across the nation, in urban, rural and remote locations. While thousands of U.S. airports serve as a vital element in the lives and livelihoods of Americans everywhere, prolonged periods of disruption at airport facilities continue to pose a legitimate threat to our communities. Water, communications, and energy utilities enhance quality of life for communities and a range of industries. Virtually every community is served by an electric and/or gas utility, water and wastewater facilities, and broadband providers, although the capacity of these services vary extensively in different regions of the country.

A range of periodic improvements to underground facilities are needed in aging airports. Airports must plan for, and then track, energy and water/wastewater needs and usage, broadband capacity and necessary documentation related to emissions. Sustainability is a main goal when planning as environmental regulations become more stringent and more industries are held accountable for their carbon footprint.

Certain larger airports are leading the industry in incorporating underground utility needs into their long-range plans, and airports can forecast utility demands by projecting growth patterns and prioritizing projects in a way that aligns with meeting larger construction goals. This helps prevent service interruptions caused by outdated underground utility systems.

Replacing aging infrastructure elevators, escalators, and mechanical equipment remain top priorities, as well as constructing new terminal and concourse public restrooms, “family” restrooms, and other public areas in airport terminals. While the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 appropriated \$25 billion over five years for airport improvement projects, we encourage you to develop and advance a bipartisan, multi-year FAA reauthorization bill with resources needed to repair and rebuild underground utilities at American airports.

We thank you for consideration of these issues as the next airport/FAA reauthorization bill is developed.

Best Regards,

American Society of Civil Engineers

Associated Equipment Distributors

Association of Equipment Manufacturers

Distribution Contractors Association

Laborers International Union of North America

National Ready Mixed Concrete Association

National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association

Plastics Pipe Institute

Water and Wastewater Equipment Manufacturers Association