



Office of the
**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR**

Jason E. Brown, County Administrator
Michael C. Zito, Assistant County Administrator

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board
of County Commissioners

FROM: Kathleen Keenan
Legislative Affairs and Communications Manager

DATE: March 10, 2021

SUBJECT: Resolution in Support of the Adoption of House Bill 1143 and Senate Bill
1466 as Filed in the 2021 Florida Legislative Session

Background

Florida's public-use airports rely heavily on funding provided by both the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for their large capital improvement projects. These projects include airfield infrastructure and facilities (runway, taxiway and parking apron pavement rehabilitation), airfield equipment, and landside road and building projects. However, regardless of the funding source, the airport sponsor is always responsible for providing matching funding from the airport or sponsor budget.

Under current state law, FDOT funds airport master planning and eligible aviation development projects at General Aviation Airports at 80 percent of project cost. General Aviation Airports are airports with no scheduled commercial airline service. The majority of these projects are maintenance of existing airport infrastructure to assure their continued safe operating condition.

When a General Aviation Airport begins to receive scheduled commercial airline service, and subsequently exceeds 10,000 annual commercial passenger enplanements, the airport is classified as a primary Commercial Service Airport by the FAA and FDOT. When an airport receives this classification, FDOT funding eligibility is reduced from 80 percent to 50 percent. This puts smaller Commercial Service Airports, like the Vero Beach Regional Airport, at a financial disadvantage. With the loss of state funding, the airport is faced with delaying or cancelling capital improvement projects.

Proposed legislation has been filed in both the House and Senate to amend section 332.007(6)(c), Florida Statutes, which regulates FDOT's funding of airports based on FAA airport classification. Representative Erin Grall has filed House Bill 1143 (Funding of Aviation Development Projects) and Senator Travis Hutson has filed Senate Bill 1466 (Airports). This legislation as proposed would authorize funding by FDOT for up to 80 percent of master planning and eligible aviation development projects for commercial service airports that have not been classified as a large, medium, or small hub airport by the FAA.

The City of Vero Beach has reached out to Indian River County requesting support for this proposed legislation.

Funding

There is no funding related to this resolution.

Recommendation

County staff recommends the Board of County Commissioners of Indian River County, Florida pass a Resolution in support of the adoption and passage of House Bill 1143 (by Representative Grall) and Senate Bill 1466 (by Senator Hutson) as filed in the 2021 Florida Legislative Session and extends its appreciation to the local legislative delegation for its support and assistance.