

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 8, 2013

The Honorable Michael Huerta
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta:

We write to express our deep concern about the slated closure of the air traffic control tower at Tweed-New Haven along with 5 additional general aviation control towers throughout the State of Connecticut. As you are well aware, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) yesterday announced the likely closure of 173 air traffic control towers around the nation on April 7, 2013. While we understand the extraordinary funding situation the FAA is in as a result of the sequester, we strongly believe that these closures will put at risk public safety in and around the airspace of Connecticut and the local economies that rely on these facilities for tax revenue and jobs.

In particular, we urge you to reconsider immediately the closure of the tower at Tweed-New Haven. We believe that public health could be at significant risk should this tower close. The Tweed tower services Yale-New Haven Hospital, not just for organ donation flights, but also for the Hospital's helipad. We have been told by local officials that the "Life Star" flights to and from this helipad for medical emergencies could be affected if the tower were to close. Tweed also has a relationship with a number of not-for-profit organizations that fly injured veterans from around the country to the nearby West Haven Veterans Affairs facility for treatment. Moreover, the Tweed tower is a filter for air traffic going into and out of New York's airports as it services the airspace—some of the busiest in the nation—in Long Island Sound and lower Connecticut. And Tweed is the only airport in New England with commercial service that is on the list of FAA closures.

We are also troubled by what the possible tower closure means for the important US Airways routes that service the airport. After years of negotiations and community involvement, US Airways now operates 4 daily flights between New Haven and Philadelphia International Airport. The airport, the city, and the region depend on this access for economic growth, including approximately 120 direct jobs. Any potential loss of this service would be devastating to the New Haven region and community as it strives to add jobs and grow its tax base.

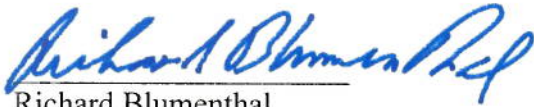
Over the years, the FAA has invested heavily in the Tweed Airport with grants totaling over \$70 million for improvements throughout the airport. During Hurricane Sandy, when the Sikorsky and Groton/New London airports were underwater, Tweed went unscathed and was

able to accept air traffic diverted from other airports. And according to the FAA's New England Regional Airport System Plan, which is considered to be a blueprint for passenger service airports in the Northeast, Tweed is 1 of 11 airports targeted for additional improvements to meet regional demand and avoid building an additional airport.

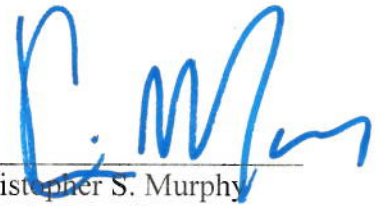
In short, Tweed is a major economic engine and public safety asset for the City of New Haven and the region. We should not put safety, jobs, or vital commercial air service at the Tweed airport at risk.

We understand you will be making a final decision about which towers to close by March 18th. We strongly urge you to reconsider your current position to close the tower at Tweed-New Haven and at other airports in the state. We look forward to your prompt response.

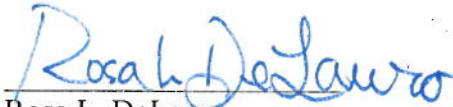
Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senate



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress