



February 20, 2019

The Honorable Gary E. Clary, Chairman  
South Carolina House of Representatives  
House Legislative Oversight Executive Subcommittee  
Post Office Box 11867  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

RE: Follow up to February 6, 2019 Subcommittee Meeting

Dear Representative Clary:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional information related to my testimony on February 6, 2019. It is my desire to complete the Oversight process with a result that strengthens the Aeronautics Commission (SCAC) and our program functions related to those we serve.

The Aeronautics Commission respectfully submits the following responses to the Subcommittee's letter dated February 11, 2019.

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**Commission**

1. Please provide demographics for the Commission since 2005, when it was re-established.
  - o Since 2005, the Aeronautics Commission has had no minority representation on any of the Commission's districts.

**Comparison to Counterparts**

- o For the following questions, SCAC compared South Carolina to Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee.
2. Please provide a comparison of SCAC to its counterparts in the Southeast United States. Examples of information to include in the comparison include, but is not limited to, staff size and differences in responsibilities.
  - o The responses provided to the following questions come from information published by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO), and through conversations had with individual state directors.
  - o The Southern states vary in several areas as indicated below, and one area that is noted relates to the Federal program functions. There are three types of management for FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) functions.

- The first type is the State Block Grant Program. In this program, states assume responsibility for administering the AIP, which is the funding program for airport development projects.
  - The second is Channeling Act states. The states that are managed this way are enabled by State Legislation, rather than Federal law. Their primary purpose is to “channel” the federal funds through the state aviation entity so that the state has the oversight that they feel may be needed for better management of the federal dollars that enter their state.
  - The final option is for states that are neither Block Grant or Channeling, and South Carolina is included in this type. For these states, the state aviation entity works with the local (FAA) Airports District Office (ADO) to prioritize projects in their states, but the overall federal grant management is administered by federal employees in those respective FAA ADO’s.
- From the latest available information, the staff sizes and differences are as follows:
- Alabama – Agency is part of a DOT, and staff is utilized to manage state airport programs including a flight asset for Airport Development program management.
    - 9 full-time employees
    - 88 public use airports
      - 88 airports eligible for State funds
      - 83 airports eligible for Federal funds
        - 6 currently unclassified and no longer receive the \$150,000 FAA entitlement
    - Average State funding available for eligible Airport Development: \$2,600,000+
    - Average Federal funding available for eligible Airport Development: \$55,000,000+
  - Florida – Agency is part of a DOT, and staff is utilized to manage state airport programs.
    - 23 full-time, airport development employees
    - 104 public use airports
      - 104 airports eligible for State funds
      - 100 airports eligible for Federal funds
        - 1 currently unclassified and no longer receive the \$150,000 FAA entitlement
    - Average State funding available for eligible Airport Development: \$250,000,000+
    - Average Federal funding available for eligible Airport Development: \$174,000,000+
  - Georgia – Agency is part of a DOT, and staff is utilized to manage state airport programs.
    - 13 full-time, airport development contract employees
    - 104 public use airports
      - 103 airports eligible for State funds
      - 95 airports eligible for Federal funds
        - 7 currently unclassified and no longer receive the \$150,000 FAA entitlement
    - Average State funding available for eligible Airport Development: \$10,000,000+
    - Average Federal funding available for eligible Airport Development: \$75,000,000+

- North Carolina - Agency is part of a DOT, and staff is utilized to manage flight department and state airport programs.
    - 31 full-time employees
    - 103 public use airports
      - 72 airports eligible for State funds
      - 72 airports eligible for Federal funds
        - 2 currently unclassified and no longer receive the \$150,000 FAA entitlement
    - Average State funding available for eligible Airport Development: \$120,000,000+
    - Average Federal funding available for eligible Airport Development: \$80,000,000+
  
  - South Carolina – Agency is independent, and staff is utilized to manage flight department and state airport programs.
    - 11 full-time employees: 3 Administration, 4 Flight, 4 Airport Development
    - 66 public use airports
      - 58 airports eligible for State funds
      - 53 airports eligible for Federal funds
        - 5 currently unclassified and no longer receive the \$150,000 FAA entitlement
    - Average State funding available for eligible Airport Development: \$4,000,000+
    - Average Federal funding available for eligible Airport Development: \$59,000,000+
  
  - Tennessee – Agency is part of a DOT, and staff is utilized to manage flight department and state airport programs
    - 33 full-time employees: 2 Administration, 13 Flight, 18 Airport Development
    - 79 public use airports
      - 74 airports eligible for State funds
      - 69 airports eligible for Federal funds
        - 1 airport currently unclassified and no longer receives the \$150,000 FAA entitlement
    - Average State funding available for eligible Airport Development: \$30,000,000+
    - Average Federal funding available for eligible Airport Development: \$68,000,000+
3. Please provide a comparison of SCAC to the counterpart SCAC believes performs most effectively and efficiently regarding services like those provided by SCAC’s airport development. Please include why SCAC believes the counterpart performs the most effectively and efficiently in the country.
- Regarding the identification of a counterpart that “performs the most effectively and efficiently in the country, I would submit that a comparison of that magnitude cannot be accomplished with the resources and timing available to answer the question. However, as a comparison to other southeastern states, the state that most effectively supports airport development programs is North Carolina. There is significant difference in the program management functions since North Carolina is a block grant state, but program eligibility is very similar.

North Carolina supports airport development programs better than any other state simply due to the level of funding that is provided to support this sector of their state transportation system.

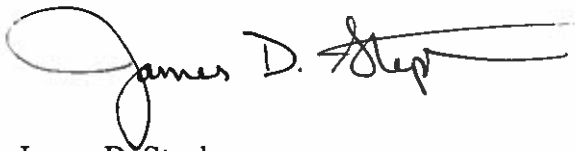
North Carolina has 72 eligible airports while South Carolina has 58. However, their overall statewide funding total is \$120,000,000+ compared to the \$4,000,000+ offered to South Carolina airports.

4. Please provide a comparison of SCAC to the counterpart SCAC believes performs most effectively and efficiently in regards to services similar to those provided by SCAC's flight department. Please include why SCAC believes the counterpart performs the most effectively and efficiently in the country.
- o Regarding the identification of a counterpart that "performs the most effectively and efficiently in the country, I would submit that a comparison of that magnitude cannot be accomplished with the resources and timing available to answer the question. However, as a comparison to other states that operate flight departments, I would submit that our flight department programs outperform others based upon quality staff, a proven history of safety and longevity, and budgetary operational efficiencies.

The flight department staff of the Aeronautics Commission consists of two (2) full time pilots, two (2) full time maintenance technicians, and our equipment consists of two (2) aircraft. Because of our staffing levels, we can meet flight requests within a two (2) hour time frame, and we are able to handle most aircraft maintenance needs in house. We maintain our own aircraft, and those of the Department of Natural Resources.

Because of our operational procedures, we have been able to provide flight and maintenance services to other state entities, and we have increased our total flight times over the past few years. These flight time increases have increased costs; however, those increases have been covered through the repayment of services offered to other state agencies. We have not had to return to the legislature for budgetary increases related to the operations of our aircraft. In comparison, other states have eliminated or significantly reduced their flight department programs because of increased costs and legislative operational limitations. Finally, because of the current legislative framework and agency operational procedures, the Aeronautics Commission can offer our flight department services with minimal financial impact to the State.

Sincerely,



James D. Stephens  
Executive Director

cc: Delphin A. Gantt, Jr., South Carolina Aeronautics Chairman  
Ira E. Coward, South Carolina Aeronautics Vice Chairman