

Testimony of George S. Coy in favor of 19-1086 is “An act relating to municipal airports”

Brief Bio of George S. Coy

- Former legislator two terms house transportation (1978-1981) one term senate finance and natural resources (1983-1984)
- FBO and small business located at Franklin County Airport from 1996 to present
- Founding member of Vermont Aviation Advisory Council Inc. (a Non-Profit aviation advocacy group supporting aviation education) (1991 to present)
- Member Vermont Aviation Advisory Council Governors commission for advising the Secretary of Transportation on Aviation matters (Inception to present)
- Pilot, aviation mechanic, retired flight instructor, business owner

I am here to testify in favor of 19-1086 as it will help restore the economic development that we experienced from the late 1990's up until the economic downturn in 2007.

I have one suggestion regarding Sec.2 DEFINITIONS. The language concerning exceptions is too general; specifically in line 10 and in line 18 the exception for “other aviation-specific activities” needs clarification as to the legislative intent. It could easily be applied to any activity.

The current policy has the TENANT responsible for any costs resulting from the preparation, improvement, and use of the leased premises. The STATE assumes no responsibility in site preparation, financial or otherwise. Franklin County Airport is a perfect case study of what happens when a State policy does not support infrastructure improvements to permit construction of private hangars.

The language of policy in place during the period of 2001 to 2007 promoted hangar development. The State built taxiways and provided fill for hangar sites resulting in the number of hangars expanding from 27 to 43.

The current iteration of the policy disincentives additional hangar growth. While the policy in its current form might make sense if it were for a single tenant where revenue generated would not offset the cost of the site preparation, it is not practical or economically savvy when applied to the context where you have an extension with multiple tenants. In this scenario, a revised policy would enable the State to recoup the costs in a reasonable time.

It should be noted that the past administration proposed a large taxiway and ramp area to the East for multiple hangar development. It was to be funded by a combination State and Federal funds and was subsequently not funded by the Federal Aviation Administration due to change of FAA priorities and lack of sufficient lobbying by VT AOT. Since then AOT has not included any funds in their budget for funding of hangar development at Franklin County Airport. After some lobbying on our part, they are moving the southern airport perimeter fence to the southern border. This will allow some additional space to the south for additional hangar development noted above.

Franklin County Airport would like the State to consider building an extension to the southern taxi lane to accommodate the construction of 9 additional hangars. The proposed taxi lane could be built utilizing the Highway district forces. The State Highway District built the existing taxi lane to the south, the taxi lane to the north, the stub taxi lane to the east, the

southern ramp and taxiway "A". We encourage the Highway division to work closely with the aviation division.

When the economy inevitably downturns, the desire to build new hangars by private individuals will likely disappear. We currently have a list of about 17 people waiting for hangars. Four of whom are willing to build hangars on the proposed south taxi lane extension, one of whom one is proposing to establish an aviation-related business that would require access to the road as well as to the taxi lane. Without support from the State, the cost of constructing the taxi lane and the requirement to buy fill would likely drive the costs beyond the economic value of the hangars.

The following is some background information on the Franklin County Airport:

The airport located in Highgate Vermont has been in existence since about 1925. In the late 1960's the State acquired the existing Missisquoi airport and some additional land to move the airport to the north. At same time, the State acquired most of the State airports we have today. It was done as many of the private and could acquire and maintain a system of county airports as was usual in other States.

The existing Franklin County Airport was constructed about 1970. It was constructed using the Vermont Army National Guard, as were several other State owned airports.

We have prepared a short video ["Franklin County Airport Aviation is a Community"](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6GAgOeey4s) specifically for the legislature. Our intention is to dispel the commonly held beliefs that airports are for large commercial activities or for wealthy people to keep their toys at the government's expense. We invite our legislators to get to know the local, hardworking individuals who have made Franklin County their home airport and enjoy the comradery and sense of place, as well as being an economically viable option to access general aviation for all. Please view when you can <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6GAgOeey4s>

Franklin County Airport General information:

1. Highgate tax revenue:
Total hangar taxes for 2018 were \$41,537.10. Only 16% (or \$6645.94) stayed in town for municipal taxes, the remaining \$34,891.16 was given to the schools for the education portion of taxes. Additional tax revenue for the proposed hangars to the south would be around \$12,000 per year.

2. State Rental income:
Total KFSO 2018 lease revenue - \$56,608.94
Annual rental income from hangars on proposed taxi lane extension:
2 - Condo hangars with 3 hangars each --- \$3,060
3 - Individual hangars ----- \$3,800
Total -----\$6,860/yr.
NOTE: 10 years income would be \$68,600.00 would offset the extension of the taxi lane and site preparation.

3. Fuel taxes:

Avgas tax 2018 ---- 23.675 Gallons \$7,102.00
Jet fuel tax 2018 ----1,383 Gallons \$ 352.00

4. Number of based aircraft: 73

5. Number of Full time employees Aviation related: 8

Aviation related business and activities. The airport is an economic generator across all sorts of sectors:

- Border Air—FBO aviation maintenance , fuel sales
- Fly Vermont – Flight school -21 students at present and 4 rental aircraft
- Malone Parachute club -- about 35 members. Jump School and offers dual-jumps to the public
- Prestige aircraft – Aircraft painting and maintenance
- Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 613 – 91 members supporting aviation education and social activities. Scholarships for learning to fly.
- CAS Ltd. – Aircraft export services for Russian clients.
- MotorstarNA – Global support of Romanian built radial engines
- C-Parts – support of U.S. built aircraft in Russia
- Up North Aviation – manufactures instrument panels and sells worldwide
- Dan Marcotte Air Shows – air shows all over the East Coast and Canada
- Highgate Aero – sales and financing of aircraft

Non- Aviation Businesses:

- The State district highway garage and offices
- The Franklin County Field days
- Franklin County Habitat for humanity
- Lapierre USA Maple sugaring equipment

6. Use of Sand Pit: The sand pit on the western edge of the airport property was opened to provide sand for concrete during the construction of I-89. It has been used by various State projects on and off. It has been used to provide fill for ramps, taxi lanes and hangar lots ever since. The new policy offered by Aviation Division is that any hangars building projects must buy their fill from elsewhere.

7. Aviation Education & Activates

- Rosie's Girls
- Missisquoi After School Programming
- Summer Day Camps
- Boy Scout Aviation Badges
- EAA Young Eagles
- Learn To Fly days

Hangar lease information: the following are some relevant excerpts from the language in the current leases between the private hangar owners and the State:

GC.II. MAINTENANCE OF AIRPORT

2.01. The STATE shall be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the following public facilities consistent with flight safety: Runways, taxiways, aircraft parking aprons, access roads, automobile parking areas, fences and runway safety strips. The State's responsibilities shall include plowing snow, mowing and fertilizing grass, and repairing asphalt and turf surfaces up to but not including areas leased to the TENANT.

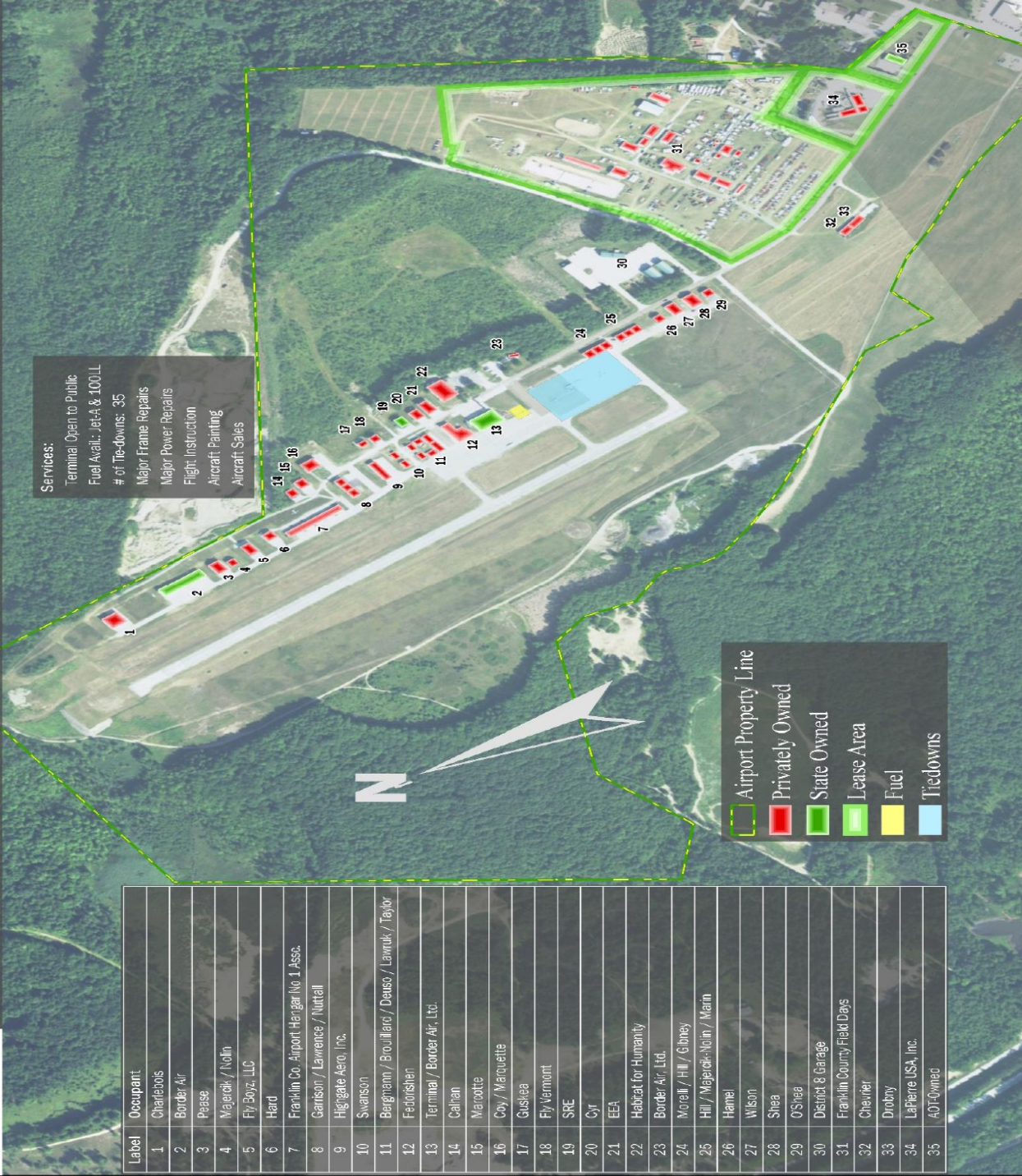
NOTE: The hangar leases include the actual footprint of the building and an additional 5 feet around the building. That is where the tenant's responsibility ends. The tenant pays for the additional square footage as part of the lease. This policy was implemented several years ago and resulted in increased lease revenue to the State.

GC.III. CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF BUILDINGS

3.04. TENANT shall be responsible for any costs resulting from the preparation, improvement, and use of the leased premises. The STATE assumes no responsibility in site preparation financial or otherwise. TENANT shall be responsible for any foundation or structural damage caused by actions of TENANT or TENANT's contractor(s) to any properties on or abutting State owned property.



Building Use at Franklin County Airport Highgate, VT



Services:
 Terminal Open to Public
 Fuel Avail.: Jet-A & 100LL
 # of Tie-downs: 35
 Major Frame Repairs
 Major Power Repairs
 Flight Instruction
 Aircraft Painting
 Aircraft Sales

Airport Property Line
 Privately Owned
 State Owned
 Lease Area
 Fuel
 Tie-downs

Label	Occupant
1	Charlebois
2	Border Air
3	Pease
4	Maerok / Holm
5	Fly-Boyz, LLC
6	Hard
7	Franklin Co. Airport Hangar No. 1, Asso.
8	Garrison / Lawrence / Nuttall
9	Higgate Aero, Inc.
10	Swanson
11	Bergmann / Brouillard / Deuso / Lawruk / Taylor
12	Fedorshien
13	Terminal / Border Air, Ltd.
14	Galhan
15	Marotte
16	Coy / Marquette
17	Guslea
18	Fly Vermont
19	SRE
20	Cyr
21	EEA
22	Habitat for Humanity
23	Border Air, Ltd.
24	Morell / Hill / Gibeay
25	Hill / Majecki / Nolin / Marin
26	Hamel
27	Wilson
28	Shea
29	O'Shea
30	Disriot & Garage
31	Franklin County Field Days
32	Chevrier
33	Drobny
34	LaPierre USA, Inc.
35	40T-Owned

Annual Maintenance Activities by State

- Snowplowing
- Mowing
- Tree Removal
- Beacon Maintenance
- Lighting Maintenance
- Facilities Maintenance
- Pavement Maintenance

Airport Data

Aircraft operations: 10,095 (2017)

EAA - Airport Users Monthly Meeting

Contact: John Fitzgerald, (802) 796-4255 eachapter613@gmail.com

Affiliated Groups

EAA Chapter 613

Needs/Opportunities (from Airport System Plan public meeting)

- Customs
- Runway extension
- Taxiway work to unlock hangar development
- Promotion of aviation and aviation jobs

Fixed-Based Operator

Cliff Coy
Border Air
629 Airport Road
Swanton VT, 05488
802-868-2822
cliff.coy@gmail.com

FBO Services Offered

- Aircraft Handling (on the ground handling, assistance with rental car, catering etc.)
- Self- Serve Fueling
- Aircraft Maintenance
- Aircraft Painting
- Aircraft Storage (hangar leasing/sales)
- Aircraft Sales
- Aircraft Rental (single, complex, multi)
- Flight Instruction (private, instrument, commercial, multi)

Investments by State (last 10 years): \$1.9 million

Major projects:

- Design & Engineering of Runway Safety Area
- Snow Removal Equipment Building

- Construction of 4-bay Hangar
- Runway Obstruction Study

Planned Investments (Next 5 years): \$16.4 million

Major projects:

- Runway reconstruction and 1,001 Extension
- Taxiway Access/Hangar Area
- Parallel Taxiway Reconstruction
- Obstruction Removal and Purchase of Easements