

**To:** Representative Walker, Chair of House Transportation  
**CC:** House Committee on Transportation Members  
**From:** Jeffrey Bartley, Director of Innovation & Marketing  
**Date:** February 26, 2026

**Subject:** Patrick Leahy Burlington International Airport Testimony Economic Impact Assessment, Appropriations, and Aviation Fuel Tax revenue

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Chairman Walker and Members of the House Transportation Committee; thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. We recognize the many difficult decisions before you as you craft the Transportation Budget, and we are grateful for your time and consideration.

First, on behalf of the Airport Administration and the entire team at the Patrick Leahy Burlington International Airport, I want to express our sincere appreciation for our strong working relationship with the Administration, Secretary Flynn and his team, as well as the General Assembly. The open lines of communication and collaborative spirit are deeply valued; and necessary to the continued success of the aviation industry in Vermont.

As Vermont's largest commercial service airport, we view ourselves as a critical economic asset to the State and the broader region. And we have the data to back up that claim.

I've included our latest Economic Impact Assessment; which we completed this year. In short, in less than eight years when our last assessment was completed, we have nearly doubled our economic output and the revenue we generate in state and local taxes.

Since 2018, we've seen a 14.4% increase in total jobs supported by the airport; bringing that total to 5,645. This accounts for a 91% increase in total payroll, providing \$325.4 million in annual income for Vermonters. The combined airport regional value; which includes economic output and existing replacement value is \$1.88 billion – an 80% increase since 2018. On taxes, in 2018 the airport generated \$34.5 million in state and local taxes. That number has increased 81% to \$62.5 million.

That growth is not accidental—it is the result of strategic investment, partnership, entrepreneurial drive, and a commitment to meeting the evolving demands of Vermont's economy and tourism sector.

The aviation industry is dynamic and highly competitive. As we manage the second busiest airfield in New England in terms of operations, we are also working to meet the needs of our region's businesses, tourism economy, military partners, and general aviation community. As we have often said: you can build a mile of road and travel a mile. Build a mile of runway, and you can travel the world.

We are deeply grateful for the State's annual \$500,000 allocation to Leahy BTV. Those funds are vital. However, today we respectfully request that the Committee ensure this allocation is not restricted solely to capital grants, matching grants, or the airport improvement program, but instead be aligned with federal statute—specifically 49 U.S.C. § 47133—allowing funds to be used for either capital or operating costs of the airport.

Current state statute references this provision. However, in practice, when we submit our annual invoice to the State, we are required to provide a detailed accounting tying the appropriation directly to specific grants.

We respectfully request that the statute and administrative practice reflect the flexibility allowed under federal code. Greater flexibility would allow us to deploy these funds where they are most needed—whether for capital match requirements, operational resilience, or strategic investments that strengthen the airport's long-term sustainability.

Additionally, while we are not formally requesting an increase in funding today, we do believe the Committee should consider the broader fiscal picture of the aviation industry in Vermont.

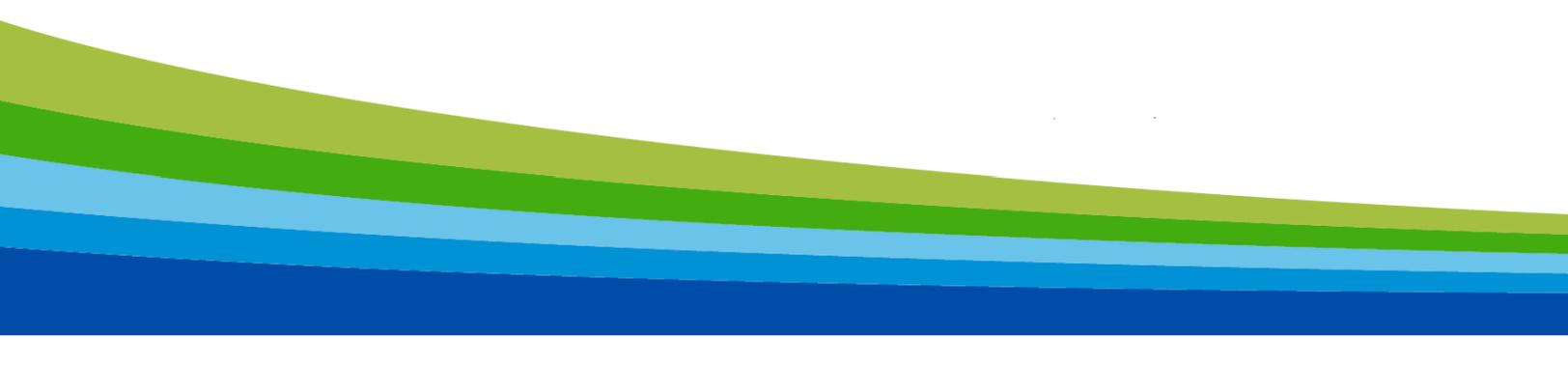
The State's contribution is currently capped at \$500,000, with those funds derived from aviation fuel tax revenue. Based on available estimates, we believe airports generates between \$3 and \$4 million annually in aviation fuel tax revenue, the majority of which is produced at Leahy BTV.

We understand there are ongoing discussions regarding municipal authority to adjust local option tax percentages, and that the implications for aviation fuel tax revenue have been reviewed. We do not have a position on this policy discussion. However, because specific figures have recently been cited regarding aviation fuel tax collections, it has prompted us to again seek clarity on the total revenues being generated.

We respectfully request confirmation as to whether a comprehensive accounting has been conducted of total aviation fuel tax revenues collected statewide and a detailed explanation of how those funds are allocated.

Transparency regarding what is generated at Leahy BTV compared to what is appropriated to our airport is essential for long-term planning — both for the State of Vermont and for BTV. Clear data allows us to responsibly forecast capital planning, assess sustainability, and ensure alignment between revenue generation and reinvestment.

This is not a new request. Over the years, we have sought a full accounting of aviation fuel tax collections and the resulting balances. We understand that compiling this information has been described as complex. However, given that the vast majority of aviation fuel sold in Vermont is purchased at Leahy BTV — and given the significant economic engine the airport represents — we believe that a transparent and comprehensive report is both reasonable and appropriate.



To be clear, at this time, we are not asking for an increase in our appropriation. However, we believe that, in the future, the State's appropriation to Leahy BTV should more closely align with the revenue generated—potentially in the range of \$1.5 million annually.

Our goal is simple: to ensure that Vermont's primary aviation gateway has the flexibility and support necessary to continue driving economic growth, supporting thousands of jobs, and connecting our state to the world.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

