

**U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell**

**AMJP Event Remarks – Tool Gauge Machine Work, Inc.**

**February 22, 2022**

**Cantwell:** Thank you Jim, and thank you to Debbie Lee, the CEO of Tool Gauge, and for Aaron and Teresita for all speaking in support of the Aviation Manufacturing Jobs Program.

We know that aviation jobs in the United States of America employ nearly 2 million Americans. We know that it's a big part of our state economy. But we know that when the downturn of aviation demand happened during COVID, that we were going to need to do something to help stabilize the supply chain.

We knew that when our economy started to rebound and that aerospace demand started to return, that if we had lost these jobs, we might, as general manager Jim said, we might not ever get them back.

And with this level of critical skill, we knew that our region could not afford to lose one more aviation worker.

So during the pandemic, we worked very hard on making sure that this Aviation Manufacturing Jobs Program focused on helping the supply chain, receive bridge funds for the future of manufacturing in aerospace.

Demand for domestic travel right now is 80% of the pre-pandemic level, which means that it is returning to help. But we knew that it would not be fully recovered until 2023.

So the Aviation Manufacturing Jobs Program is designed to support the aviation supply chain and help them be ready to rebound when that uptake occurs. So that is why Jim was just saying, he couldn't have survived without it, and yet, he couldn't grow the future opportunity without keeping those individual employees.

What the Aviation Manufacturing Jobs Program does is it allows them to support 50% of their employees total compensation cost, including health care benefits, to up to 25% of their employees.

Under this program, U.S. Department of Transportation awarded \$673 million to over 593 companies in the supply chain. That helped us save 35,000 important critical skill jobs in this sector that is so important to the competition and competitiveness for our aviation base here in the state of Washington.

In Washington, the program provided over \$57 million in funds to over 68 different companies in our state that were part of that supply chain. And Tool Gauge here, it helped them secure 38 jobs. So I'm pretty sure that both of the individuals, Aaron and Jim could tell us, and probably Teresita also, how that exactly helps you be competitive for the future.

They mentioned to me another company that didn't apply for the funds and now is no longer in business. They now are doing that work here at Tool Gauge.

So this took everything for us to do to save our competitiveness nature here in the Pacific Northwest.

Keep complex, quality metal and plastic parts being assembled and made for aerospace here in Washington state.

We're proud of this skill set that many Washingtonians exhibit, it is helping us in our battle to be competitive in an ever-growing, complex, changing aerospace manufacturing base.

But, I know that these companies would have had bigger challenges, lost a workforce, and maybe gone out of business without this program.

So we're glad to be here today to see exactly how Tool Gauge is applying this. To say that we're glad that U.S. manufacturing took advantage of this, and are catching the rebound for aerospace, that is now starting to happen.

Boeing just recently announced that was hiring 5,000 new people. Believe it or not, that will actually make Tool Gauge's job even more challenging. We all want to see the job growth, but often times, that company takes from the supply chain, which means Tool Gauge has to have the workforce it needs.

So we're so glad to hear the success of this program. We look forward to seeing the production facilities here today. And we're glad that aviation is starting to recover from this downturn and that airlines are starting to pick up their orders, and that Tool Gauge is looking to hire.

Aviation is starting to hire, and we're thankful these programs made it through this incredibly difficult COVID period for all of us.

Thank you.