

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

September 20, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing in support of Tri-Cities Airport's application to the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Airport Terminal Program grant program. Tri-Cities Airport is seeking \$19 million for its Terminal Improvement Project.

The Tri-Cities is the greater metropolitan area of the cities of Pasco, Kennewick, and Richland in south central Washington at the confluence of the Yakima, Snake, and Columbia rivers. The area is growing rapidly, with a 22% population growth over the last ten years, bringing the population to more than 340,000 residents. Tri-Cities Airport, operated by the Port of Pasco, is the fourth-largest air carrier airport in the state and the largest airport in the southeastern Washington and northeastern Oregon region. The airport has ten nonstop destinations and has increased enplanements by nearly 100,000, representing both the continued vibrancy of the region and the growing flight service available at the airport. However, as the Tri-Cities keeps growing, so does plane size and enplanement frequency. Airports are critical to local economies, which Congress recognized when it provided funding for air travel infrastructure nationwide as part of the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law—including investing \$5 billion in the Airport Terminal Program.

If successful, Tri-Cities Airport will use Airport Terminal Program grant funding to address capacity requirements defined by its 2013 FAA approved Terminal Area Plan that were never implemented in previous projects. Specifically, Tri-Cities Airport will expand the currently constrained capacity for outbound baggage and purchase three additional passenger boarding bridges to be added to existing gates. The passenger boarding bridges will allow the airport to better accommodate larger planes and up-gauged fleets now servicing the airport, improving efficiency, competition, passenger safety, and accessibility. The project will help Tri-Cities airport scale and modernize as the surrounding community and economy grows.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of Tri-Cities Airport's application to the Airport Terminal Program grant program.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell

United States Senator