

Testimony of Sean Burton
Nominee to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington
Airports Authority
Before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
June 8, 2022

Good morning. Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, and Members of the Committee. I want to thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today as the nominee to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA). I am grateful to the President from nominating me to this Board. It is a great honor.

I want to begin by thanking my wonderful wife – Teresa – and my children – Grace and Russell – for their love and support. My wife and daughter are watching this hearing from home, and I am grateful that my son is here with me.

I am excited about this opportunity to serve and believe my public and private sector experience will be a benefit to the Board and the Authority. MWAA's mission is to provide world-class facilities and services to the traveling public in the National Capital Region. This includes Dulles and Reagan National airports, Dulles Toll Road, and the Metro Silver Line. To do this effectively, MWAA must remain competitive as passengers have a choice as to which airports they use and where they spend their money. And airlines have a choice of where to serve their passengers. Modern airports that are convenient for passengers, give them cost effective options as to where to fly, and focus on creating a great passenger experience, are the preferred options for both leisure and business travelers. Also, airports are major economic development engines and job creators for a region and are critical to meeting the needs of the region's business and economic interests.

The primary responsibility of the Board is to set policy from MWAA and to oversee and provide direction to management. I have significant and relevant experience in this capacity. Since 2013, I have been on the Board of Los Angeles World Airports ("LAWA"), which oversees LAX and Van Nuys general aviation airport, and served for 8 of those years as President. At LAWA, we dealt with many of the same issues that MWAA faces – controlling costs, boosting revenue, and managing balance sheet debt. Moreover, we have worked to find innovative solutions to many of our most pressing problems, especially in the use of technology. We have also implemented the largest airport modernization in the country focused on creating the best passenger experience possible. If confirmed, I hope to bring this experience to bear at MWAA along with a fresh perspective on how to take advantage of the opportunities that exist.

MWAA has several challenges as well as opportunities going forward. Safety and security must always be the top priority of an airport. Without this, nothing else matters. This is the chief concern of every airport but takes on even greater importance because of the proximity of both airports to the Nation's Capital. These greater security responsibilities (and the costs that come with them) must always be a primary focus of MWAA Management and the Board. I have extensive experience dealing with these issues at LAWA. LAX is the number one terrorist target on the West Coast. For that reason, LAX has the largest police force of any airport in the nation in addition to full time dedicated intelligence staff. I created and have chaired the Security

Committee at LAWA to ensure that our officers and management have everything they need to protect our passengers and employees and our city. I will bring the same focus and commitment to MWAA.

From a financial perspective, MWAA's airports must be cost-competitive for its passengers, concessionaires, and airlines. For MWAA management and the Board, this responsibility includes growing revenue, controlling expenses, and effectively managing debt. As our country emerges from the pandemic, MWAA's management and Board must remain diligent in finding innovative ways to continue to help its airports recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic.

Finally, MWAA faces unique issues because it operates a two-airport system as a unit under its enabling legislation. This means the two airports must be kept in balance, according to their size and capabilities. Maintaining this balance is important for growing the region's international air service, which is based at Dulles, due to its much larger terminal and runway capacity. Moving domestic flights away from Dulles to DCA may prompt international carriers seeking domestic connections to move flights to other airports that do not serve the National Capital Region. These concerns must be considered when the Board is setting policy going forward.

I am passionate and excited about the opportunity to serve on MWAA's Board. I would like to thank the Committee for considering my nomination this morning, and I look forward to your questions. Thank you.