

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION**

*“Nominations of Ms. Robin Hutcherson, to be Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration; Dr. Michael C. Morgan, to be Assistant Secretary for Environmental Observation and Prediction; Mr. Sean Burton, to be a Member of the Board of Directors, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority”*

10:00 AM, June 8, 2022

**Questions for the Record from Chair Maria Cantwell to Mr. Sean Burton**

***Sustainability and Airports.*** The aviation sector is taking steps to become more sustainable and reduce its environmental impact. Aviation currently represents 11 percent of U.S. transportation-related emissions and 2.5 percent of global emissions, and aviation emissions are expected to triple by 2050. So we must do better.

Airports can play a key role in reducing aviation emissions by implementing sustainable aviation solutions. In my home state of Washington, Sea-Tac International Airport (“Sea-Tac”) became the first U.S. airport to set a specific timetable and goal for transitioning all its airline users to operate with commercially competitive sustainable aviation fuel (“SAF”). Sea-Tac set a goal to power every flight fueled at the airport with at least a 10 percent blend of sustainable aviation fuel (“SAF”) by 2028. Additionally, Los Angeles World Airports (“LAWA”) began using SAF at LAX in 2021 as part of its sustainability action plan to become carbon neutral by 2045.

As part of Build Back Better, my SAF and low-emissions aviation technology grant program includes \$300 million to help build infrastructure necessary to produce, transport, blend, and store SAF, as well as develop, demonstrate, or apply low-emissions aviation technology for convenient use in existing aircraft operating today. I also support the *Sustainable Skies Act*, legislation to create a \$1.50 to \$2.00 per gallon blender's tax credit for SAF that achieves a 50 percent or greater reduction in lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions compared to conventional petroleum-based jet fuels. Getting aviation on a sustainable path moving forward is important and given the broad support from aviation stakeholders for these programs, I believe these proposals will help us achieve this goal.

*Question 1.* Based on your experience working with LAX, what actions will you take to increase sustainable aviation efforts and ensure necessary infrastructure is in place to support the use of SAF at Dulles International Airport and Ronald Regan Washington National Airport?

Answer: Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) provides the best opportunity in the short term to reduce the aviation carbon footprint. We worked with our airline partners at LAX and our operators at Van Nuys airports to promote and enable the use of SAF. In CY 2021, LAX dispensed nearly 6.8 million gallons of SAF while Van Nuys dispensed approximately 1 million galls of SAF. At LAX, SAF is being used by United Airlines, Delta Air Lines, JetBlue, KLM, Viva Aerobus and Atlantic Aviation. Airlines see the use of SAF as the best way to address environmental concerns and desire to increase the use of SAF for their fleets. Thus, the demand for the use of SAF at both airports is high, but there is not enough supply to meet this demand.

LAWA is working with federal and state elected officials to help get legislation in place that enables, promotes and incentivize the increased supply and use of SAF. This is not something that airports can accomplish by themselves, so airports need to collaborate with partners and elected officials to increase the manufacturing, transport and storage of SAF.

Specific initiatives that I would attempt to explore at Dulles and Reagan National include:

- Develop a working group with the airlines to determine the best way to ensure the infrastructure exists at the airports to be able to obtain and accommodate a larger supply of SAF such that it can be more affordable for the airlines to use – and to develop a joint approach for promoting the use of SAF.
- Determine what the airports can do to facilitate the implementation of infrastructure to enable the delivery, storage and pumping of SAF.
- Develop an approach to working with state and federal legislators and office holders to enact laws and/or develop programs to promote the manufacture and supply of SAF.

There are numerous other sustainability measures that airports can take toward achieving a goal to reach zero emissions. Some key initiatives that I would attempt to explore at Dulles and Reagan include:

- Develop clear and significant sustainability goals, targets and timelines to get the airports to zero emissions.
- Develop a Sustainability Action Plan to show how the airports will achieve the goals, targets and timelines.
- As part of the plan, develop an approach and plan to move all airport vehicles to zero emission vehicles – and a plan to incent airlines, ground handlers and other operators to move to zero emission vehicles, where technically feasible.
- Develop the infrastructure to allow for the charging of airport electric vehicles, transportation network company vehicles, taxis and private vehicles.
- Develop design policies and guidelines for new construction and facilities to ensure facilities are being built or improved sustainably (e.g., reduce energy needs, water use efficiency, etc.).
- Develop clean construction policies to reduce emissions for construction projects.
- Develop comprehensive waste management and recycling policies, practices and plans.
- Develop energy management plan to reduce usage of energy,

*Question 2.* What is your broader vision for the future of airports in terms of implementing technology to facilitate sustainable travel and trade?

*Answer:* Some key technologies that airports should consider implementing to become more sustainable include:

- Alternative power technologies
  - o Solar panels to generate energy to power airports.
  - o On-site energy storage, e.g., battery farm, microgrid, etc., to save excess power generated and for added resiliency.
  - o Hydrogen powered cogeneration facility to produce sustainable, off-grid power.

- Organic waste recycling solutions including composting facilities and digestors to process food waste and use the resulting products for fuel and fertilizer.
- Wastewater recycling solutions.
- Noise portals to help track noise complaints and give residents the ability to post noise complaints and to information about air traffic in their area.
- Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).
- Electronic vehicles (EV) and EV charging facilities.
- Electronic Ground Service Equipment for airline and ground handling partners.
- Electrification of gates and aircraft positions to reduce emissions for standing aircraft.
- Smart parking solutions to reduce search time for parking and reduce wait time at parking lot entrances and exits.