

Testimony in Support of  
Congressional House Bill 1990,  
April 30, 2019

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Submitted Testimony for the Record  
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Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
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National Aviation Heritage Area Reauthorization Act (H.R. 1990)

Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Bishop, and members of the Subcommittee, my name is Amanda Wright Lane, and I am a great grand niece of Orville and Wilbur Wright.

Fifty years ago, NASA made a request of the Wright family. It wished to obtain wood fragments and pieces of muslin cloth from the world's first successful aeroplane, the 1903 Wright Flyer. NASA and Neil Armstrong wanted to honor the young brothers who gave the world wings, and my Dayton family obliged. On July 20, 1969, when Armstrong stepped on the moon, he carried in the leg of his spacesuit small bits from the genesis of human flight, as he commenced a new genesis. Essentially, three Ohio pioneers stepped on the moon that day, and I am proud to say, aerospace still captures our imaginations, leads our economy, improves our life on earth, and connects us globally like no other technology has in the history of man.

In this 50th anniversary year of Armstrong and Apollo 11, I respectfully ask you to support the National Aviation Heritage Area Reauthorization Act of 2019 (H.R. 1990) introduced by Representatives Mike Turner and Joyce Beatty. This bi-partisan bill will allow the National Aviation Heritage Area, NAHA, to continue to share America's inspiring aerospace stories with our nation's youth, and young people from around world.

"Zero to Fifteen" is not a reference to the air speed of a Wright Flyer, it wasn't that fast. It references the first years of NAHA's existence. With congressional support as a new heritage area NAHA moved quickly to advocate for the work of our heritage partners, particularly the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park and the National Museum of the United States Air Force, and we began marketing heritage tourism on behalf of the region. Here are some highlights:

NAHA convened a multi-interest community working group to support a successful public opening of the National Museum of the United States Air Force's 4th exhibit hangar, a space that interprets the "future" for the Air Force, featuring STEM learning modules.

*"Isn't it astonishing that all these secrets have been preserved for so many years just so we could discover them!" —Orville Wright*

NAHA supported heritage tours for celebrities like “The Wright Brothers” author David McCullough, Charles Lindbergh’s great grandson Erik Lindbergh, and actor Tom Hanks. And our region hosted journalists and TV crews from around the world.

NAHA gathered partners and community leaders to welcome the international team of Solar Impulse, when the solar aircraft landed in the heart of NAHA on its around-the-world journey. Dayton was one of a select few stops, with chief pilot Bertrand Piccard declaring his team insisted on touching down at the “home base of pioneers”.

NAHA advocated for the gift of a rare vintage Waco aeroplane for the WACO Museum and Airfield in Troy, Ohio. Faced with competition from other towns, our NAHA letters of support won the donation. The smaller efforts can often make our heritage area such a uniquely rich destination.

Why is reauthorization is critical to our ongoing work? Every day NAHA invites folks like me to experience this legacy... it welcomes grandmothers, veterans, homeschoolers, world travelers, guiding them thru a LIVING American aviation history lesson with the aid of interstate signs, brochures, and partner markers that let you know YOU HAVE ARRIVED in the National Aviation Heritage Area. With the NMUSAF, local CVBs, and the NPS, we are currently gathering market data to help us expand our reach throughout the nation, and to improve our use of websites and social media.

In May, NAHA will host our 3rd Aviation Writers’ Summit. Hand selected, a group of aviation industry and interest writers will be given a 3 day behind-the-scenes tour of the heritage area, with special focus on the life of Neil Armstrong. The last summit produced articles in the New York Times, Washington Post, and Air and Space. Leveraging a small amount of dollars, we got extraordinary national news coverage, and generated priceless goodwill between the media and our partners.

Visitors to NAHA can fly in a look-alike Wright Flyer, OR peruse the 1908 contract between the Wrights and the Army Signal Corps for the America’s first flying machine. Partners Wright B Flyer, Inc. and Wright State University Special Collections and Archives have done great work with NAHA grants because of YOUR decision to fund national heritage areas. Thank you, I urge your continued support.

These experiences are why I am here. We must spread the word about the newly designated (thank you, Congressman Turner), and renovated, Wright Brothers National Museum...home of the 1905 Wright Flyer. And NAHA must continue advocacy for the restoration of the Wright Company Factory, the 6th site of our National Park, where men and women worked side by side building aeroplanes and the aviation industry. As its first champion, NAHA has solicited over \$5 million for this project.

Please don’t ask me about aspect ratio, or angle of incidence, with regard to flying machines, do ask me why my heart races when I speak about our nation’s magnificent aviation heritage. In 2012, I asked friend Neil Armstrong if he would

speaking about Uncle Will, at a ceremony honoring Wilbur's life, 100 years after his death. He said "yes" immediately. The day of the event he told the crowd he considered Wilbur Wright to be an absolute paragon. That day Neil was merely an aviator and engineer, paying tribute to another he'd never met, but greatly admired. This July at the Armstrong Air and Space Museum, Americans will have the chance to proudly do the same for Neil, pay tribute. I am truly passionate about the aviation stories we've made and the ones that are yet to come. Please support reauthorization of the National Aviation Heritage Area H.R. 1990. Thank you.