

**Statement for Rep. Derek Kilmer (WA-06)**  
**House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**  
**Member Day Hearing on FAA Reauthorization**  
**April 18, 2023**

Chair Graves, Ranking Member Cohen, and Members of the Aviation Subcommittee, thank you for hosting today's Member Day hearing and thank you for your work and leadership.

I am here today because I represent a region that is especially vulnerable to natural disasters, and I know how critical our airports are to our emergency preparedness and disaster response. Unfortunately, airports are not immune to the impact of natural disasters and climate change – but they are charged with responding to disaster and evacuation events. With that in mind, it's critical that Congress steps up to ensure that airports have the resources they need to continue this important mission.

An example in my neck of the woods is the Fairchild International Airport in Port Angeles, Washington—where I grew up—on the Olympic Peninsula. The Fairchild Airport, in addition to being an economic driver, is also a vital emergency lifeline. In this rural area, the region's residents rely on Fairchild to quickly reach advanced medical care at hospitals in larger cities that may otherwise be hours away by car. Additionally, in the event of a natural disaster such as a major seismic event or wildfire, two threats of disaster that are very real in the Pacific Northwest, the airport is designated by FEMA as an emergency staging area and expected to serve the region by distributing supplies and other vital services. In other words, ensuring the resiliency of this airport in turn guarantees the resiliency of this community.

We also know that many more communities across the country face these resiliency challenges, with their local airports also taking up the task. That's why I'm pleased to be introducing a bill called the Resilient Airports Act alongside my colleague, Representative Earl Blumenauer of Oregon. This bill is based on a provision in the Moving Forward Act that I was pleased to work on with the Aviation Subcommittee in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress. Specifically, it would expand Airport Improvement Program (AIP) eligibility for critical infrastructure projects that increase the resiliency of airports against earthquakes, hurricanes, flooding, tornadoes, and other natural disasters. Furthermore, it would ensure that General Aviation airports that are designated as a federal staging area by FEMA, like the Fairchild Airport in Port Angeles, are included in this eligibility. This is important because it ensures that all airports charged with emergency and disaster response, including those that serve rural communities, are included in this opportunity to build resiliency and serve their communities. I look forward to introducing this legislation in the coming weeks and encourage the subcommittee to consider its inclusion in the upcoming FAA reauthorization.

I greatly appreciate your leadership, partnership, and your consideration of these requests and I am happy to provide additional information as you review them. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before the subcommittee today.