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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

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April 26, 2019

Governor JB Pritzker
State of Illinois
207 State House
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker,

The time has come to finally build the South Suburban Airport, so Illinois can reclaim its aviation pre-eminence and boost our economy. SSA affords Illinois a unique opportunity to develop the safest, greenest, most innovative and customer-friendly airport in the U.S. As proposed, it will create an economic engine south of Chicago that would generate tens of thousands of jobs, hundreds of millions in annual tax revenues, and billions in new economic activity for Illinois.

Thus, we urge you to apportion \$150 million in the 2020 capital bill for initial off-site improvements—a new interchange on I-57, local road upgrades, and connectivity to utilities (electric, natural gas, water, sewer, and broadband), all projects that are needed even without an airport due to the booming I-57 logistics corridor in South Cook and Will Counties.

Just as Midway and O'Hare spearheaded Illinois' growth for the past century, SSA will be a cornerstone for prosperity in the 21st century. It will also make Illinois a bigger, more vital player in the global e-commerce explosion; complete North America's largest "inland port" in Will County; and provide a new "downstate" passenger and cargo hub for residents and businesses from Joliet, Kankakee, Bloomington, Champaign, Decatur, Springfield, plus Northwest Indiana.

In 1985 the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) urged Illinois to build a third Chicago airport, correctly predicting then that Chicago would reach its aviation capacity by 2000. Due to constrained capacity, Chicago has been losing aviation market share for years. Since 2000, O'Hare slipped from the world's 12th to the 21st busiest cargo airport. Meanwhile, United and American Airlines have both moved their primary domestic hubs out of O'Hare (to Denver and Dallas-Fort Worth, respectively). Without new capacity, this market share slide will continue, leaving Chicago less competitive with domestic markets and still with limited overseas reach.

While the FAA says Chicago needs a third airport for national capacity concerns, Illinois needs it for the inevitable economic benefits. The diverse Southland continues to lag behind the rest of the metro area's economic recovery. The unemployment rates in the 46-community Southland area average 60 percent higher than that of the entire six-county metro area (14.2 % to 8.9%). Meanwhile, median income for the same 46-community Southland is 33 percent lower than that of the entire six-county metro region (\$51,803 to \$77,151). As for jobs, the South Side and South Suburbs lost more than 125,000 jobs in recent decades, while the Northwest Suburbs added hundreds of thousands of new jobs, in large part due to O'Hare. Making matters worse, Southlanders are saddled with the state's highest property taxes. Taken together, those numbers are not sustainable for a healthy Southland (home of 1.5 million Illinoisans) or a healthy state.

While little progress was made on SSA in four years, we're 90 percent of the way done with the planning. The state owns 90% of the land and has appropriated funds for the rest, while the FAA has approved 90% of the pre-planning (including need, size, location, EIS, air space, etc.) The FAA now awaits only the final detailed "master plan" to issue a final Record of Decision.

Thanks to bipartisan efforts by five governors over decades, Illinois has secured the key components – land assemblage, legislative authority, and broad business, labor and political support. While it took considerable time, airports never happen quickly. It's worth noting that Chicago faced a similar debate in the late 1950s over building O'Hare. O'Hare opponents then raised the same objections we hear today, as the airlines, Chicago City Council, civic organizations and city business groups all contended Chicago had the world's busiest airport (then Midway) and didn't need O'Hare. Despite widespread opposition, Mayor Richard J. Daley alone had the foresight to build O'Hare. Imagine Chicago today if he hadn't.

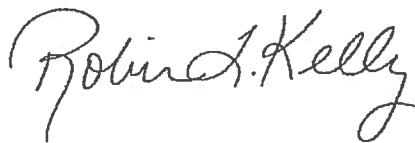
Briefly, here is some perspective on airport building in the United States and abroad:

- Chicago is the largest US market without three airports – New York, Washington DC, Miami, LA and San Francisco all have three major airports.
- The US has built one airport in 50 years, replacing Denver Stapleton with Denver International. China has built 35 new airports in the last five years.
- Every newspaper in Chicago plus many across the US have repeatedly called for construction of SSA, the *New York Times* even calling it a "no-brainer."

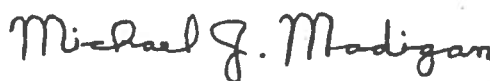
Chicago makes no small plans. And as Governor you are encouraging big ideas. The FAA said since 1985 Chicago needs SSA. Five governors and IDOT spent years buying land and planning it. Illinois remains the crossroads of the nation, but Will County and downstate economies need more aviation capacity. SSA can be a state-of-art e-commerce hub. And beyond the aviation benefits, there are the economic ones. Airports are the world's greatest jobs and tax generators. SSA could reverse a 20-year trend of shrinking market share. It would create jobs where they're needed most (Southland and downstate). It would generate huge new tax bases. It would make Illinois more competitive with other US and foreign markets. It would be the first major US airport funded by private – not public – dollars. And it could be done on your watch!

We look forward to working with the Administration to create a new shining star with 21st Century American ingenuity.

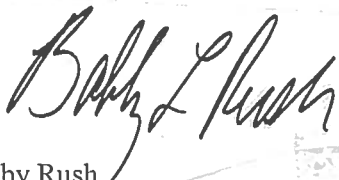
Sincerely,



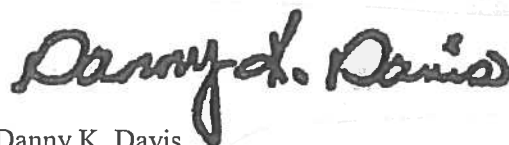
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



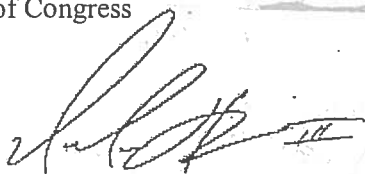
Michael J. Madigan
Speaker Illinois House



Bobby Rush
Member of Congress



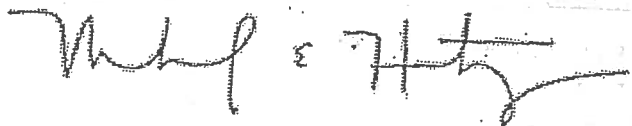
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Napoleon Harris III
State Senator



Toi Hutchinson
State Senator



Michael Hastings
State Senator



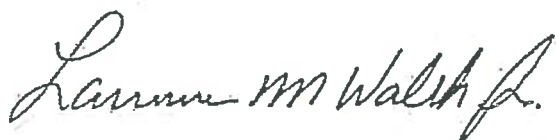
Pat McGuire
State Senator



Anthony DeLuca
State Representative



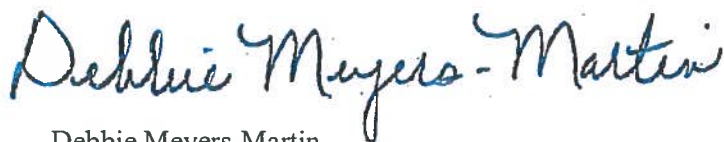
William Q. Davis
State Representative



Lawrence Walsh, Jr.
State Representative



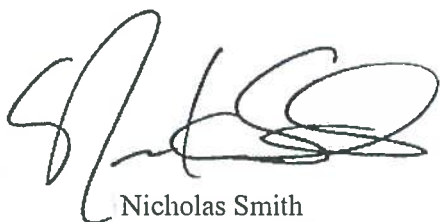
Robert Rita
State Representative



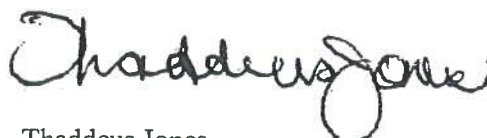
Debbie Meyers-Martin
State Representative



Kelly Burke
State Representative



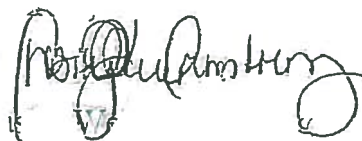
Nicholas Smith
State Representative



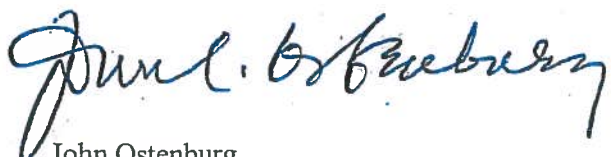
Thaddeus Jones
State Representative



Vernard Alsberry
Mayor of Hazel Crest



Chasity Wells-Armstrong
Mayor of Kankakee



John Ostenburg
Mayor of Park Forest



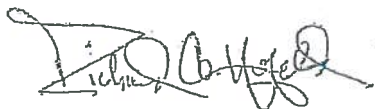
Rick Reinbold
Mayor of Richton Park



David Gonzales
Mayor of Chicago Heights



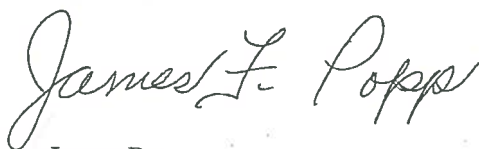
Michelle Qualkinbush
Mayor of Calumet City



Richard Hofeld
Mayor of Homewood



Paul Braun
Mayor of Flossmoor



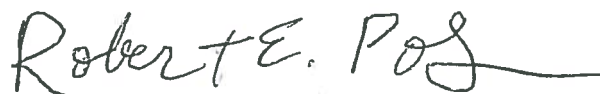
James Popp
Mayor of Monee



Brian Stump
Mayor of Aroma Park



Sheila Chalmers-Currin
Mayor of Matteson



Robert Polk
Mayor of Burnham



Michael Einhorn
Mayor of Crete



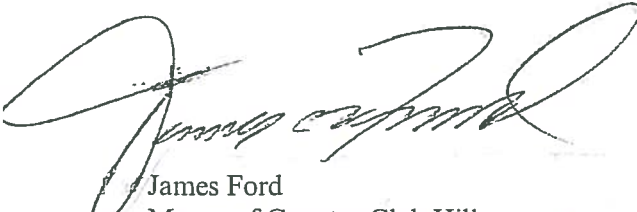
Louis Presta
Mayor of Crestwood



Kyle Hastings
Mayor of Orland Hills



Eugene Williams
Mayor of Lynwood



James Ford
Mayor of Country Club Hills



Don DeGraff
Mayor of South Holland



Riley N. Rogers

Riley Rogers
Mayor of Dolton



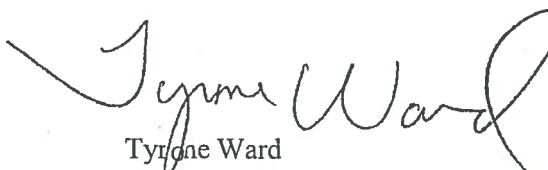
Terry Wells

Mayor of Phoenix



Gary L'Heureux

Mayor of Midlothian



Tyrone Ward

Mayor of Robbins




Paul Schore

Mayor of Bourbonnais



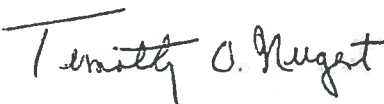
Bruce W. Adams

Mayor of Bradley



Mark Hodge

Mayor of Hopkins Park



Timothy O. Nugent

Mayor of Manteno



Robert Kolosh

Mayor of Thornton



Terry Matthews

Mayor of South Chicago Heights



Donna Miller
Cook County Commissioner



Stanley Moore
Cook County Commissioner



Leslie Hairston
Chicago Alderwoman



Pat Dowell
Chicago Alderwoman



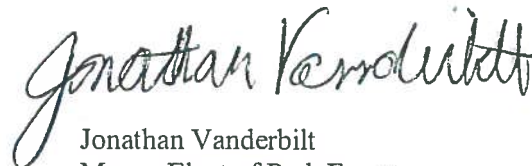
David Moore
Chicago Alderman



Susan Sadlowski Garza
Chicago Alderwoman



Vivian Covington
Mayor of University Park



Jonathan Vanderbilt
Mayor-Elect of Park Forest



Joseph Roudez III
Mayor-Elect of University Park



Elgie R. Sims, Jr.
State Senator