



Saint Louis County

100 North Fifth Avenue West, Room 202 • Duluth, MN 55802
Phone: (218) 726-2450 • www.stlouiscountymn.gov

February 14, 2025

House Transportation Finance & Policy Committee
Representative John Koznick, Chair
Representative Erin Koegel, DFL Lead

SENT VIA E-MAIL

RE: Duluth International Airport Air Traffic Control Tower Replacement

Dear House Transportation Finance & Policy Committee Members,

On behalf of the City of Duluth and Saint Louis County, we are pleased to offer our strong support for funding the replacement of the aging air traffic control tower at Duluth International Airport (DLH). This critical piece of infrastructure is essential to ensuring the continued safety, efficiency, and growth of air commerce and aviation services across our region. It is critical to continuing passenger air service in Duluth and for continued growth and stability with the U.S. Air National Guard's 148th Fighter Wing and large employers like Cirrus Aircraft.

Duluth International Airport plays an important role in supporting our regional economy. The airport serves as a gateway for local businesses to reach national and global markets, a key hub for military operations, and a reliable transportation link for residents and visitors alike.

The current air traffic control tower has served the region for more than 70 years and is outdated and increasingly unable to meet the operational demands of modern aviation. Replacing this tower is not only critical for maintaining the highest safety standards but also necessary for ensuring the airport's ability to accommodate future growth in passenger and cargo traffic.

Investing in this project aligns with broader efforts to enhance transportation infrastructure in our region, support economic development, and strengthen the resilience of our aviation network. A modernized air traffic control tower will enhance operational capabilities, improve safety for all users, and enable the airport to attract new business opportunities that benefit communities throughout northeastern Minnesota.

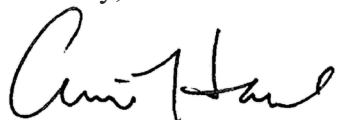
Duluth International Airport provides vital service to the region. Commercial, cargo, and medical service flights all utilize the airport, which is also home to Cirrus Aircraft, the #1 manufacturer of piston aircraft in the world, and the 148th Fighter Wing of the Minnesota Air National Guard, making the airport crucial to our economic and national security. The airport supports over 6,000 jobs and contributes roughly \$760 million annually to the economy.

Finally, a \$14 million investment by the state of Minnesota helps leverage more than \$52 million in federal funding for this project. This is a good deal for the state of Minnesota and our taxpayers.

This federal money is being used quickly and if we wait any longer, we may risk losing out on full funding. The time is now to advance this very important regional project.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical infrastructure need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Annie Harala". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Annie" being more prominent than the last name "Harala".

Annie Harala, Chair

St. Louis County Board of Commissioners