

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 3, 2022

The Honorable Stephen Dickson
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Dickson:

We write regarding the processes by which the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) communicated with Manchester-Boston Regional Airport (MHT) about the deployment of new 5G wireless technology and its potential impact on aviation safety policies and procedures. As the federal agency charged with providing the safest, most efficient aerospace system in the world, it is absolutely vital that all guidance and information from the FAA to airports, airlines, and the public be prompt, comprehensive, and clear.

Increasing 5G access is necessary for small businesses to compete, for our economy to continue to innovate and grow, and for young people to do their homework. As we continue to expand 5G, the FAA must also be transparent, quick, and informative about its interaction with aviation safety.

At MHT, the FAA has restricted usage to Runway 35, which serves as the primary low-visibility approach into the airport for the winter season, which has been very active this year. The FAA determined that low-visibility approaches to Runway 35 are not available due to potential interference from a new transmitter tower located in Massachusetts. We recognize and appreciate that the FAA has approved 90 percent of the civil aircraft fleet to conduct these low visibility approaches through the alternative methods of compliance (AMOC) process. However, it is our understanding that these AMOCs are limited in duration and will require recurring approvals by the FAA. We are concerned that these approvals may be impacted due to the continued maturation of the 5G network.

While we appreciate the hard work and dedication of the FAA team in getting these AMOCs approved, we are concerned to hear that MHT leadership was not informed by the FAA about the approach restrictions until after the restrictions were put into place. According to MHT officials, there was no proactive communication concerning the restrictions by FAA to the airport, and it was only due to the diligence of MHT employees that MHT learned of the restrictions when it did. MHT has dedicated, knowledgeable, and hardworking staff, and they should never be in the

position of wondering if they are getting the complete picture from our country's primary air safety watchdog.

MHT is an important contributor to New Hampshire's economy, and serves as a critical link in the supply chain for Northern New England and Massachusetts with over 200 million pounds of cargo moving through the airport annually. It also had the potential to serve as a secondary servicing site for aircraft diverted from other airports in the region that are currently on the initial FAA Commercial Airports with Low-Visibility Approaches in 5G Deployment list. This makes it even more concerning that the FAA has not had robust communication with MHT about restrictions.

As the FAA continues to ensure that aircraft can continue to operate safely, we strongly urge FAA leadership to evaluate the processes by which information is communicated to FAA personnel on the ground, who have existing and strong relationships with the regions that they serve. The FAA must also evaluate and strengthen how it communicates to airport operators, local and state transportation officials, air carriers, and other affected parties.

Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator