

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1304

April 5, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to follow up on the December request, sent by Members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation, asking for you to convene a meeting between the City of Chicago, United Airlines, American Airlines, and the Illinois Congressional delegation on the O'Hare Terminal Area Project (TAP). All parties urgently need the expert mediation that only the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) can provide to ensure a deal that is both fair and beneficial to local taxpayers and all passengers who fly through O'Hare.

To preserve the Airport's world-class status, any agreement must include the 25% gate capacity increase that was part of the original 2018 TAP agreement, which primarily would come from the addition of a Satellite 2 terminal. However, the airlines have continued to advocate for a plan that either indefinitely delays or removes Satellite 2 altogether, which would result in *two* new gates for O'Hare within the same timeframe.

O'Hare is the fourth-busiest airport in the world, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) estimates that enplanements at O'Hare will grow from 32.6 million in 2022 to 71.9 million by 2050. Adding gates incrementally would fail to prepare O'Hare to accommodate this projected growth, as our country's other busiest airports continue to plan and execute major upgrades and expansions.

With this in mind, it cannot be overstated that both Chicago and the Midwest's economic success and connectivity are at stake in this decision—a decision in which USDOT and the FAA have a vested interest, considering O'Hare's present success as a top asset within the national aviation system. In Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024 alone, O'Hare received a combined \$90 million investment from the FAA's Airport Terminal Program for its Terminal 3 renovations, through two of the largest airport grants awarded thus far under the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*. To ensure the greatest impact of these federal investments at the Airport, its other planned upgrades must proceed as originally planned and approved by all parties.

I respectfully request your timely assistance in meeting with the City, the airlines, and members of the Illinois delegation to yield the best possible outcome for not only the people of Illinois, but all global citizens who fly through O'Hare.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dick Durbin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator