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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

April 23, 2019

The Honorable Daniel K. Elwell
Acting Administrator
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Elwell,

Following the recent release of National Facilities Realignment and Consolidation Report, I am writing to request that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reconsider its recommendation to relocate Air Traffic Control (ATC) operations from both Binghamton Greater Airport (BGM) and Elmira-Corning Regional Airport (ELM) to Pennsylvania's Scranton-Wilkes Barre Airport (AVP). This consolidation will result in the loss of good-paying local jobs in the Southern Tier of New York and could impact overall service and safety.

According to the report's recommendation, ATC towers with Local Control would remain at both Binghamton and Elmira-Corning airports, while TRACON, which manages the airspace outside of the Local Control perimeter, would be remotely controlled in Pennsylvania. I am concerned that controllers at the Scranton-Wilkes Barre Airport lack the regional familiarity and knowledge of local controllers currently based in Binghamton and Elmira-Corning.

The consolidation of ATC operations would also result in the loss of good-paying local jobs and consequently have a damaging impact on the Southern Tier economy. At both Binghamton and Elmira-Corning airports, nearly half of each location's controller positions are expected to be cut, resulting in a \$1 million loss in local salaries. Further, for the controllers who would retain their jobs, the salaries for these positions are expected to decrease as the facilities will likely be reduced from a Class 5 to a Class 4 workforce.

Finally, this recommendation was made based on rationale that the FAA could realize significant savings resulting from could be smaller than predicted by the report. The report also touts the Scranton-Wilkes Barre Airport's upgraded Standard Terminal Automation System, which is predicted to reduce the cost of ATC operations even further. Yet this system has already been upgraded at both Binghamton and Elmira-Corning airports, rendering these operations just as efficient in the Southern Tier as they would be in Pennsylvania. Given this, it is questionable whether small cost savings of would outweigh the negative economic impact on the community and safety.

I strongly urge you to reconsider this relocation and consolidation for the benefit of the Southern Tier community and the safety of New York's pilots and passengers alike. Thank you for your serious consideration of this request, and I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator