



News From

Maggie Brooks

Monroe County Executive

For Immediate Release
Monday, May 6th, 2013

BROOKS CALLS ON CONGRESS TO PROTECT LOCAL TRAVELERS AND JOBS

County Executive traveling to Washington to address potential consequences of sequester fix; FAA funding shift could impact ROC, aviation safety, and local jobs

Monroe County Executive **Maggie Brooks** will travel to Washington D.C. tomorrow to urge Congress to reconsider the potential impacts of its recent approach to alleviating air traffic delays instigated by across the board federal spending cuts, commonly known as sequester. At a press conference today, **Brooks** indicated that Washington's solution could have major unintended consequences for the Greater Rochester International Airport (ROC), air travel safety in Western New York, and over 300 local jobs.

*"Facing outcry from travelers across the nation in the face of air traffic delays caused by sequester, Congress recently took action to ease their concerns," said **Brooks**. "Although certainly well-intentioned, Washington's remedy shifted existing capital improvement monies out of one fund to cover air traffic control operating costs in another. Everyday families can't shift their monthly mortgage payments to cover their utility bills, and Congress shouldn't either."*

Legislation was recently passed by both houses of Congress, and signed by the President, to restore Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funding and end the furloughs of air traffic controllers across the nation. However, the legislation shifted existing funding out of the FAA's Airport Improvement Program (AIP) to provide a temporary solution. The new legislation could have a major impact at ROC, where reduced AIP funding could scuttle major capital improvement projects slated for 2013. Additionally, the solution does not address future FAA funding to avert a current plan to end over-night FAA staffing at ROC's air traffic control tower.

*"This legislation could be felt deeply in our community," said **Brooks**. "Vital improvement projects planned for 2013 at our airport could be impacted, jeopardizing hundreds of local jobs. If we were to go forward without FAA funding, our partner airlines would likely have to pick up the bill. Since increased operations, maintenance, and repair costs have a direct impact their bottom line, they may be forced to pass the burden on to local travelers through higher fares."*

Ten capital improvement projects are planned for ROC in 2013, involving nearly \$15 million in investment and expected to sustain 319 local jobs. Over 70% of the total

funding for these ten projects had potential to be secured from the AIP. The new legislation puts that plan in jeopardy.

“The reliability of air service across Western New York could also be threatened,” continued **Brooks**. *“Our airport’s Runway Four is the only one of its kind in Western New York, allowing pilots to safely descend until the runway is in sight in the most challenging weather. Unfortunately, this runway may not be available if the FAA eliminates over-night control tower staffing, so at-risk flights could be diverted as far away as Albany or New York City.”*

ROC’s Runway Four has a Category II Instrument Landing System (ILS) approach which allows pilots to make a gradual and shallow descent to a lower altitude than a normal ILS. This system allows for safe operations during low visibility weather. Of Western New York’s three international airports, ROC is the only to feature a Category II ILS runway. For safety reasons, this approach cannot operate without a staffed air traffic control tower.

“By working closely with representatives from our area’s Delegation, we can communicate that an FAA solution which threatens aviation safety and our local economy is not really a solution at all,” said **Brooks**. *“I am hopeful that Washington will do the right thing for our community by taking action to protect local travelers and local jobs.”*

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