

Commerce Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1457

AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT ZONE IN THE TOWN

Title: OF PLAINVILLE.

Vote Date: 3/13/2025

Vote Action: JOINT FAVORABLE

PH Date: 3/11/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Commerce Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Airport Development Zone designations seek to promote economic and community growth in the areas around airports in Connecticut. The Robertson Airport in Plainville, CT is an essential part of the local economy and community in Plainville. This bill seeks to encourage continued business expansion and community investment in the region around Robertson Airport by establishing an Airport Development Zone in that area.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Daniel O'Keefe, Commissioner, Department of Economic and Community

Development: The Department of Economic and Community Development **supports** this bill. They believe that it does not create a significant programmatic change for them.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Cal Hauburger, Economic Development Coordinator, Town of Plainville, CT: He, on behalf of the Town of Plainville, expressed his strong **support** for the bill, noting Plainville's significant investment in their airport over the years. It is a major factor contributing to the town's growing economy that has drawn new and successful businesses to the area. He believes the Airport Development Zones lead to growth and investment in communities, so this bill will continue to help the Robertson Airport and Town of Plainville see success.

Andrew Zeppa, President, Element 119 LLC: Element 119 is a manufacturing business located near Robertson Airport in Plainville, CT. As the president of Element 119, Andrew

expressed his support for the bill, noting the positive economic impact the Airport Development Zone designation could have on the area. He believes the benefits of this designation will promote business expansion, facility upgrades, and new investments, as well as increase competitiveness. He cites successful implementation of the designation in other areas in CT and urges the Commerce Committee to pass this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Jay Rhoades, Taxpayers United: He expressed his opposition to this bill, stating that he believes there are too many airports in CT already and questioning why people can't drive instead.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Sean Collins, Eastern Regional Manager, Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA): They expressed **support, with an amendment**, which would establish an airport development zone in Plainville, Connecticut. Representing nearly 3,000 Connecticut members, AOPA highlights the economic importance of general aviation (GA) airports, which support various activities like business travel, flight training, and emergency response. Collins argues that creating development zones at GA airports can boost regional growth and tax revenue, as seen in Pennsylvania's successful statewide Airport Land Development Zone program. They urge Connecticut to adopt a similar statewide approach to avoid disadvantaging other public-use airports and to attract greater investment. **AOPA supports SB 1457, provided it is expanded to include all public-use airports in the state.**

Reported by: Alexander Mercier, Clerk

Date: 3/24/2025