

May 15, 2019  
Member Day Hearing  
T&I Committee

## Testimony of U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, thank you for the opportunity you have given me to submit my views about the critical importance to fully support the U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Aviation Administration's William J. Hughes Technical Center and the need for a recreation title in any infrastructure package to address outdoor recreation infrastructure needs.

### **Coast Guard**

I represent New Jersey's 2nd congressional district which encompasses over 40 percent of the state's land mass and is home to the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center in Cape May, the birthplace of the enlisted corps, and the Air Station in Atlantic City.

Training Center Cape May is the Nation's only Coast Guard Recruit Training Center, and the 5<sup>th</sup> largest base in the Coast Guard.

Its mission is to develop the enlisted workforce for the U.S. Coast Guard.

Training Center Cape May is attached to more than 350 military and civilian personnel and more than 4,000 of America's finest young men and women arrive for boot camp here, the first chapter of their Coast Guard career.

Air Station Atlantic City opened in 1998 and is the newest and largest single airframe unit of the Coast Guard's air stations.

It is located in Atlantic City International Airport in Egg Harbor Township along with another of South Jersey's crown jewels, the William Hughes Technical Center.

Air Station Atlantic City is comprised of 10 MH-65D Dolphin Helicopters and supports a wide range of Coast Guard operations such as: search and rescue, law enforcement, port security, and marine environmental protection.

The Air Station also provides multiple aircraft and crews to protect our Nation's capital, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, at the National Capital Region Air Defense Facility under the operational control of the North American Aerospace Defense Command.

I hope that this committee can work with the Appropriations Committee to provide \$10 billion in discretionary funding to the U.S. Coast Guard which would be equal to the fiscal year 2019 enacted level.

This funding would allow the Coast Guard to secure our borders and disrupt drug and human trafficking and to continue to save lives at sea.

Of particular importance is the need to fund the first phase of the Barracks Renovation at Training Center Cape May at \$30 million to recapitalize the barracks for three recruit companies to accommodate both genders, including providing classrooms and administrative support.

I also request that the committee work with appropriators to provide \$2.6 million to recapitalize Travel Lift Piers to meet sufficient load capacity and support boat maintenance at Training Center Cape May.

Furthermore, I ask that the committee work with appropriators to provide the necessary funding for a 3.1 percent military pay raise in 2020 to maintain parity with the Department of Defense for military pay.

### **Tech Center**

I am proud to represent over 1,400 men and women at the William J. Hughes Technical Center in Atlantic City who keep our skies safe.

The Tech Center is the Federation Aviation Administration's national scientific test base for the research, development, test, and evaluation of air transportation systems.

The research, testing and prototype development conducted by Tech Center staff helps shape the future of our nation's air transportation system.

In short, it is the nation's premier air transportation system federal laboratory.

The Technical Center has a number of unique laboratories engaged in research that contributes to aviation system development: air traffic management laboratories, simulation facilities, a human factors laboratory, the NextGen Integration and Evaluation Capability, a Cockpit Simulation Facility, a fleet of specially-instrumented in-flight test aircraft, the world's largest full-scale aviation fire test facility, a chemistry laboratory for analyzing the toxicity of materials involved in a fire, surveillance laboratories, a full-scale aircraft structural test evaluation and research facility, the National Airport Pavement Test Facility and an Unmanned Aircraft Systems research and development simulation laboratory.

The Tech Center is the heart of an aviation cluster that is unparalleled – a lot of the work at the Tech Center is done in partnership with academic, private, and public entities such as NASA, the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Marshalls, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

I hope that the committee can work with the Appropriations Committee to support robust funding for the Tech Center Laboratory Facility, Laboratory Sustainment, NextGen and Operations Planning, NextGen Support Portfolio, and Fire Research and Safety, among others.

At a minimum, the committee should work with the appropriations committee to ensure that all programs located at the Technical Center are funded at the enacted levels, at a minimum.

### **Recreational Infrastructure**

I encourage the committee to consider the role that recreation-based infrastructure plays in supporting the U.S. economy and to prioritize these needs as the committee continues its work in developing a robust infrastructure package.

An infrastructure package should fully and properly address the needs of outdoor recreational infrastructure, especially for boating and fishing, by containing a “recreation title.”

Recreational boating, for example, is a noteworthy contributor to the U.S. economy that generates \$170.3 billion in annual economic impact that supports more than 35,000 businesses and 690,000 jobs.

In terms of GDP, outdoor recreation is larger than mining, utilities, and chemical products manufacturing.

Any infrastructure package should address dredging needs impacting recreational boating, study innovative recycling solutions, improve broadband access in federally managed lands and waters to support recreational safety and direct the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct several studies.

The GAO should study the U.S. Army Corps (Corps) assets and range of activities it does to expand access to important waterways, study the economic impact of outdoor recreation on property managed by the Corps and study and assess the status of aquatic invasive species throughout the country.

I believe that these measures are consistent with the pragmatic and bipartisan makeup of this committee and I thank you for your time and consideration.