

Illinois Airports Score Major Victory with Channeling Act Amendment

Today, in a major victory for Illinois airports and their surrounding communities, Gov. Pritzker signed SB-1232 which amends the Illinois Aeronautics Act. Illinois airport executives raised concerns about the Act in early 2020 and received bipartisan support for the amendment which better defines the role of the Illinois Department of Transportation when it comes to regulating aviation in the state of Illinois.

[SB-1232](#) targets a subsection of the Illinois Aeronautics Act known as the Channeling Act, and streamlines how commercial service airports in the state of Illinois receive federal money awarded by the FAA to airports, better defines allowable use of state money for the construction of public aeronautical facilities and clarifies the role of the state regarding federal investment in commercial service airports.

“This amendment will clear the path for federal funds to go directly to the intended sponsor, while reducing inefficient practices, and increasing accountability and transparency about how federal dollars are rolled out and used in local communities,” said Benjamin Leischner, A.A.E., executive director, Quad Cities International Airport. “The way the Act was written created an unnecessary level of bureaucracy at the state level that is remedied with this amendment, which more closely follows federal guidance and best practices.”

While the Channeling Act has long been a barrier to airports’ ability to make important operational improvements in compliance with FAA standards, the impact of COVID-19 brought the situation to a head. In March 2020, the CARES Act designated millions of emergency funding to airports. This was at a time when airports were experiencing anywhere from a 60-90% decline in passengers resulting in major losses of revenue. While neighboring states received funds in a matter of days, Illinois airports waited nearly 6 months. This delay was a direct result of the Channeling Act’s language.

Leischner also serves as chairman of the Illinois Airports Council which was founded in 2020 by Illinois airport executives to represent the interests of airports in the state.

“On behalf of the Illinois Airports Council, I want to thank our elected officials for their unanimous support for this amendment,” said Leischner. “This amendment corrects a years-long struggle with how federal support is funneled into our communities. Our citizens, local contractors and regional economies will reap the benefits.”

Senate sponsors include: Christopher Belt, Steve Stadelman, Dale Fowler, Neil Anderson, David Koehler, Steve McClure and Rachelle Crowe

House Sponsors include: Michael Halpin, Mike Murphy, Maurice A. West, II, Tony McCombie, Jay Hoffman, Lance Yednock, Dave Vella, LaToya Greenwood, Martin J. Moylan and Natalie A. Manley



**METROPOLITAN AIRPORT AUTHORITY
OF ROCK ISLAND COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

About Quad Cities International Airport

Quad Cities International Airport is located in Moline, Illinois, and serves passengers from western Illinois and eastern Iowa. With 10 nonstop destinations, the airport served over 700,000 passengers in 2019. Four major airlines operate out of QC Airport including Allegiant Air, American Airlines, Delta Air Lines and United Airlines. The airport boasts a 10,000-foot runway that can land any aircraft in any weather conditions, as well as U.S. Customs and Border Protection as an International Port of Entry Airport, making it ideal for commercial flights and general aviation. Charter and fueling services are available. For more information visit qcairport.com.

About Illinois Airports Council

The [Illinois Airports Council](http://IllinoisAirportsCouncil.org), or IAC, was founded in 2020. It is a nonprofit corporation representing the aviation industry in the state of Illinois, and led by Illinois airport executives. Its goals include:

1. The promotion and advancement of the interests of civil airports within the state of Illinois;
2. To serve as a centralized platform in the exchange of information for airport operators;
3. The identification and tracking of state legislation that pertains to airports; and
4. Representation of airport operators through engagement with the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Division of Aeronautics in establishing and maintaining Best Management Practices for the application of State funds to the State Aviation System.

Any general inquiries or interest in membership can be directed to ILAirportsCouncil@gmail.com