



October 22, 2025

**The Honorable Sean Duffy**  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation

**The Honorable Bernie Moreno**  
United States Senator

**The Honorable Jon Husted**  
United States Senator

**The Honorable Shontel M. Brown**  
United States Representative

**Re: Support to Close Burke Lakefront Airport and Unlock Cleveland's  
Downtown Lakefront**

Dear Secretary Duffy, Senator Moreno, Senator Husted, and Representative Brown:

On behalf of the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, we respectfully request your partnership and support to begin the formal process — working with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and regional stakeholders — of decommissioning Burke Lakefront Airport (BKL) and repurposing this uniquely situated, approximately 450-acre waterfront site for public access and job-creating development.

This is a once-in-a-century opportunity for Ohio. We have a historic opportunity to assemble a continuous downtown waterfront that can accelerate the promise of unobstructed shoreline access, economic vitality, and world-class design. Closing Burke will create a lakefront that is accessible to all and make Cleveland competitive with the world's most dynamic waterfront cities.

For decades, Burke has consumed a vast stretch of lakefront land while aviation activity has steadily declined. What was once envisioned as a flourishing reliever airport is today an underutilized airfield with a fraction of its former traffic. The limited benefits it provides no longer outweigh the opportunity costs of keeping nearly 450 acres of prime downtown waterfront walled off from public use and economic growth. Repurposing this land will unlock transformative potential — parks and trails along the lake and new development opportunities that could deliver billions in long-term impact for the city, county, region, and state.



We recognize this move requires federal partnership and compliance with FAA regulations, including environmental review, resolution of grant assurances, and careful planning to accommodate necessary aeronautical activity elsewhere in the region. Cleveland and Cuyahoga County are committed to working through this process responsibly together, ensuring that critical general aviation needs — such as medical transport and business travel — can be absorbed by Cleveland Hopkins International, Cuyahoga County Airport, and other regional facilities. In doing so, the overall aviation system will be strengthened as the downtown lakefront is opened for new public and economic uses.

At the same time, while the FAA has the authority to approve a closure under existing law, we believe explicit Congressional authorization would provide certainty, accelerate the timeline, and eliminate any ambiguity that could delay progress. Federal legislation affirming the right to close Burke Lakefront Airport would send a strong signal of unified support and demonstrate alignment in unlocking this extraordinary asset for the benefit of the region.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask for your partnership. We request that the Department of Transportation collaborate with Cleveland on a formal roadmap and timeline for closure, and that our Congressional delegation reinforce this effort by urging FAA action and considering authorization language that affirms the city's ability to decommission Burke Airport.

We deeply appreciate your support for lakefront redevelopment to date. With your leadership, we can deliver a nationally significant waterfront district — one that drives economic growth, expands public access to Lake Erie, and creates opportunities for generations to come. We look forward to accelerating this vision together.

We look forward to working with you on next steps.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Justin M. Bibb, written in a cursive style.

**Justin M. Bibb**  
Mayor of Cleveland

A black ink signature of Chris Ronayne, written in a cursive style.

**Chris Ronayne**  
Cuyahoga County Executive