There is a strong relationship between South Carolina’s economy and aviation. The state’s system of airports is essential in the global market place. Airports in South Carolina have helped to both lead and sustain growth and economic diversification. Airports support the state’s economy and are also economic generators. Residents, businesses, and visitors rely on the airport system to support health, welfare, and safety needs. South Carolina’s military airfields are also important to our national security.

South Carolina is served by a diversified system of airports. The state’s commercial service and four general aviation airports are essential underpinnings to South Carolina’s diversification and business base, its growing population, and its burgeoning tourism industry. In addition, South Carolina is home to four busy military airfields. Commercial aviation includes all scheduled airline flights, charter flights, and flights flown by air cargo companies. All other flights by civilian aircraft are classified as general aviation. Operations by military aircraft constitute the remainder of the state’s annual aviation activity. A methodology approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) was used to calculate the economic impacts associated with South Carolina’s civilian airport system and its four military airfields. Airport related economic impacts were identified for three categories: direct, indirect, and multiplier.

Direct impacts are those associated with on-airport employers, business, and tenants. Direct impacts occur as a result of the provision of aviation services. Indirect impacts are those tied to spending by visitors who arrive in South Carolina through one of the public commercial or general aviation airports. As direct and indirect impacts are released into the local, regional, and statewide economies, additional multiplier impacts are created. The economic impacts created by the multiplier effect re-circulate until the benefits ultimately leak outside South Carolina. Multipliers that are specific to South Carolina were created. The economic impacts created by the multiplier effect are expressed as total economic activity or output.

Aviation in South Carolina supports additional payroll/earnings benefits. It is estimated that on an annual basis, public commercial service and general aviation airports and the four military airfields are responsible for $1.9 billion in payroll/earnings benefits.

South Carolina also realizes additional tax benefits from aviation. When taxes on fuel, personal property, and income are considered, airports, airfields, aviation related activities and those employed by aviation contribute at least $73.6 million to the tax base of the state. Fuel taxes and property taxes alone account for an estimated $18.9 million in annual tax receipts for the state and its counties. From a state perspective, it is considered for three categories: direct, indirect, and multiplier. It is projected that approximately 12 percent of the taxes being collected from aviation fuel and property taxes will be returned to the state’s aviation fund.

A first class airport system is essential to South Carolina. A strategic program to invest in, maintain, and grow commercial and general aviation airports is critical to South Carolina’s economic future.

Chester-Catawba Regional Airport is a general aviation airport owned by Chester County and operated by Chester County Airport Commission. The airport, located between Columbia, SC and Charlotte, NC is conveniently located off of Interstate 77 and in close proximity to I-85.21. Chester-Catawba Airport has two asphalt runways: Runway 17/35, measuring 5,000 feet long by 100 feet wide; and Runway 5/23, measuring 4,998 feet long by 150 feet wide. The airport generates $387,200 in direct output, of which $85,000 is paid to approximately 4 direct full-time jobs. Additionally, 3,750 general aviation visitors arrive at the airport each year, generating another $150,000 in indirect aviation-related output. Including the multiplier effect, the airport tenants and visitors at Chester-Catawba Regional Airport generate $927,300 in total economic output, of which $427,500 in payroll is paid to 15 full-time equivalent jobs. Airport activities include recreational flying, parachute jumping, glider towing, and various services related to the health, welfare, and safety of the community.

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Aviation Benefits Everyone

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THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF
Chester-Catawba
Regional Airport

VISITOR SPENDING  DIRECT IMPACTS  AVIATION TAX BENEFITS
JOBS/EMPLOYMENT  ECONOMIC ACTIVITY/OUTPUT  PAYROLL/EARNINGS
PAYROLL/EARNINGS  QUALITATIVE BENEFITS  INDIRECT IMPACTS
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY/OUTPUT  VISITOR SPENDING