South Carolina is served by a diversified system of airports. The state’s 6 commercial service and 54 general aviation airports are essential underpinnings to South Carolina’s diversified 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 identified for three categories: direct, indirect, and multiplier.

South Carolina’s Total Annual Economic Benefits from Aviation

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 $68.9 million in annual tax receipts for the state and its counties. From a state perspective, 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.

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South Carolina’s Total Annual Economic Benefits from Aviation

Fairfield County Airport is a general aviation airport owned and operated by Fairfield County. The airport, located in the Midlands, is approximately 10 miles from Interstate 77. Fairfield County Airport has one asphalt runway, Runway 10/28, measuring 5,500 feet long by 100 feet wide.

The airport generates $319,900 in direct output, of which $75,000 is paid to approximately 3 direct full-time jobs. Additionally, 5,100 general aviation visitors arrive at the airport each year, generating another $127,500 in indirect aviation-related output. Including the multiplier effect, the airport tenants and visitors at Fairfield County Airport generate $768,500 in total economic output, of which $268,800 in payroll is paid to 9 full-time equivalent jobs.

Regular airport activities include aircraft maintenance, corporate/business activity, recreational flying, and various services related to the health, welfare, and safety of the community.
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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 $16.9 million in annual tax receipts for the state and its counties, from a state perspective. 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.

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South Carolina is served by a diversified system of airports. The state’s 6 commercial service and 54 general aviation airports are essential underpinnings to South Carolina’s diversified 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.

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.

The state’s 6 commercial service and 54 general aviation airports are essential to the state’s aviation fund. A strategic program to invest in, maintain, and grow commercial and general aviation airports is critical to South Carolina’s economic future. Expenditures in this category are in addition to those identified in the earnings or payroll category. These impacts are expressed as total annual economic activity or output. For South Carolina, this annual benefit is estimated at $4.3 billion.