

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4449

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a remote air traffic control tower pilot program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 3, 2016

Mr. KATKO (for himself and Mr. LIPINSKI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a remote air traffic control tower pilot program.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. REMOTE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER PILOT**
4 **PROGRAM.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the
6 completion of a safety risk management panel conducted
7 by the Federal Aviation Administration for the Leesburg,
8 Virginia project, the Secretary of Transportation shall es-
9 tablish a pilot program under which the Secretary shall
10 install and operate not more than 6 remote air traffic con-

1 trol towers to assess the benefits of the technology of such
2 towers.

3 (b) REQUIREMENT FOR OPERATION.—Before air
4 traffic is actively controlled by a remote air traffic control
5 tower at a participating airport, the Secretary shall com-
6 plete a safety risk management process for the individual
7 airport.

8 (c) APPLICATION.—An operator of an eligible airport
9 may submit to the Secretary an application to participate
10 in the pilot program under this section before such date
11 and containing such information as the Secretary may re-
12 quire.

13 (d) SELECTION CRITERIA.—

14 (1) SELECTION OF AIRPORTS.—From among
15 applications submitted under subsection (c), the Sec-
16 retary may select for participation in the pilot pro-
17 gram—

18 (A) 1 nonhub primary airport;

19 (B) 2 reliever airports without existing air
20 traffic control towers;

21 (C) 1 primary airport for the purpose of
22 augmenting the capabilities of an existing air
23 traffic control tower; and

24 (D) 2 airports classified as local or basic in
25 the national plan of integrated airport systems.

1 (2) APPLICANT SELECTION.—In carrying out
2 the pilot program under this section, the Secretary
3 shall—

4 (A) in consultation with the exclusive rep-
5 resentative certified to represent air traffic con-
6 trollers under 7111 of title 5, United States
7 Code, establish a list of benefits of remote
8 tower technology to the National Airspace Sys-
9 tem and criteria that facilities should meet in
10 order to best achieve those benefits; and

11 (B) select applicants for participation in
12 the pilot program based on such criteria.

13 (3) ABILITY TO ALTER AIRPORT SELECTION.—
14 If the Secretary receives an insufficient number of
15 applications, the Secretary may alter the site dis-
16 tribution in paragraph (1).

17 (4) DEADLINE.—The Secretary shall select air-
18 ports for participation in the pilot program not less
19 than 90 days after the date that the applications
20 under subsection (c) are required to be submitted.

21 (5) PARTICIPATION IN CONTRACT TOWER PRO-
22 GRAM.—An airport selected for participation under
23 the pilot program shall be eligible for participation
24 in, and funding from, the control tower contract pro-

1 gram established under section 47124 of title 49,
2 United States Code.

3 (e) ASSET CLASSIFICATION.—A remote air traffic
4 control tower and ancillary equipment installed with Gov-
5 ernment funds pursuant to this section shall be considered
6 an air navigation facility as defined in section 40102 of
7 title 49, United States Code.

8 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 (1) ELIGIBLE AIRPORT.—The term “eligible
10 airport” means a public-use airport, as defined in
11 section 47102 of title 49, United States Code.

12 (2) REMOTE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER.—
13 The term “remote air traffic control tower” means
14 a facility that—

15 (A) is designed to provide the functions of
16 an air traffic control tower for an airport with-
17 out regard to whether the tower is located at
18 such airport; and

19 (B) receives from such airport, through a
20 secure network, high definition real-time im-
21 ages, sensor data, and other data from relevant
22 systems.

1 (g) PERIOD OF THE PILOT PROGRAM.—The pilot
2 program under this section shall terminate on the date
3 that is 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

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