



TDOT

Department of
Transportation



Aeronautics Division
Tennessee Department of Transportation

TDOT Aeronautics Division

State of Aviation
Senate Transportation and Safety Committee

John-Paul "JP" Saalwaechter, Aeronautics Director | February 4, 2026

Economic Impact Study Results (2019)

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT **\$40** BILLION

AVIATION CONTRIBUTES **11%** OF TENNESSEE'S GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

JOB

 **220,936** employed

PAYROLL

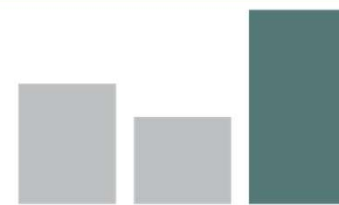
 **\$13** billion



\$11,957,000,000
ON-AIRPORT



\$8,632,000,000
VISITOR SPENDING



\$19,292,000,000
FREIGHT/CARGO



AC { • **\$19.5 B**

GA { • **\$1 B**

\$1.11 B
in State and
Local Taxes

Aeronautics Division

Priorities



Aviation Safety and Compliance



Airport System Preservation and Investments



Aviation Promotion, Workforce and Economic Development

Management of:



FAA Block Grant Program

- Distribute funding to 64 general aviation airports
- Air Carrier airports work directly with FAA



State Aviation Funding

- For Air Carriers **and** General Aviation



Statewide Programs

Statewide Programs

- Airport Licensing (*Rule 1680-01-02*)
- Airport Improvement Program (AIP)
- Asset Management (e.g., Pavements)
- Airport Maintenance Grants
- Automated Weather Observing Systems (AWOS)
- Operation Data Counters
- Emerging Technologies
- Education/Outreach:
 - TN Airport Professionals (TAP) Academy
 - Aviation Education Grants

Successes



2025's Most Innovative
Statewide Program
TAP Academy

NASAO AWARDS
National Association of State Aviation Officials

One of the first states
to deploy traffic data
counters at all
*GA airports



\$31 M
of preventative pavement
maintenance at
64 airports
since 2021

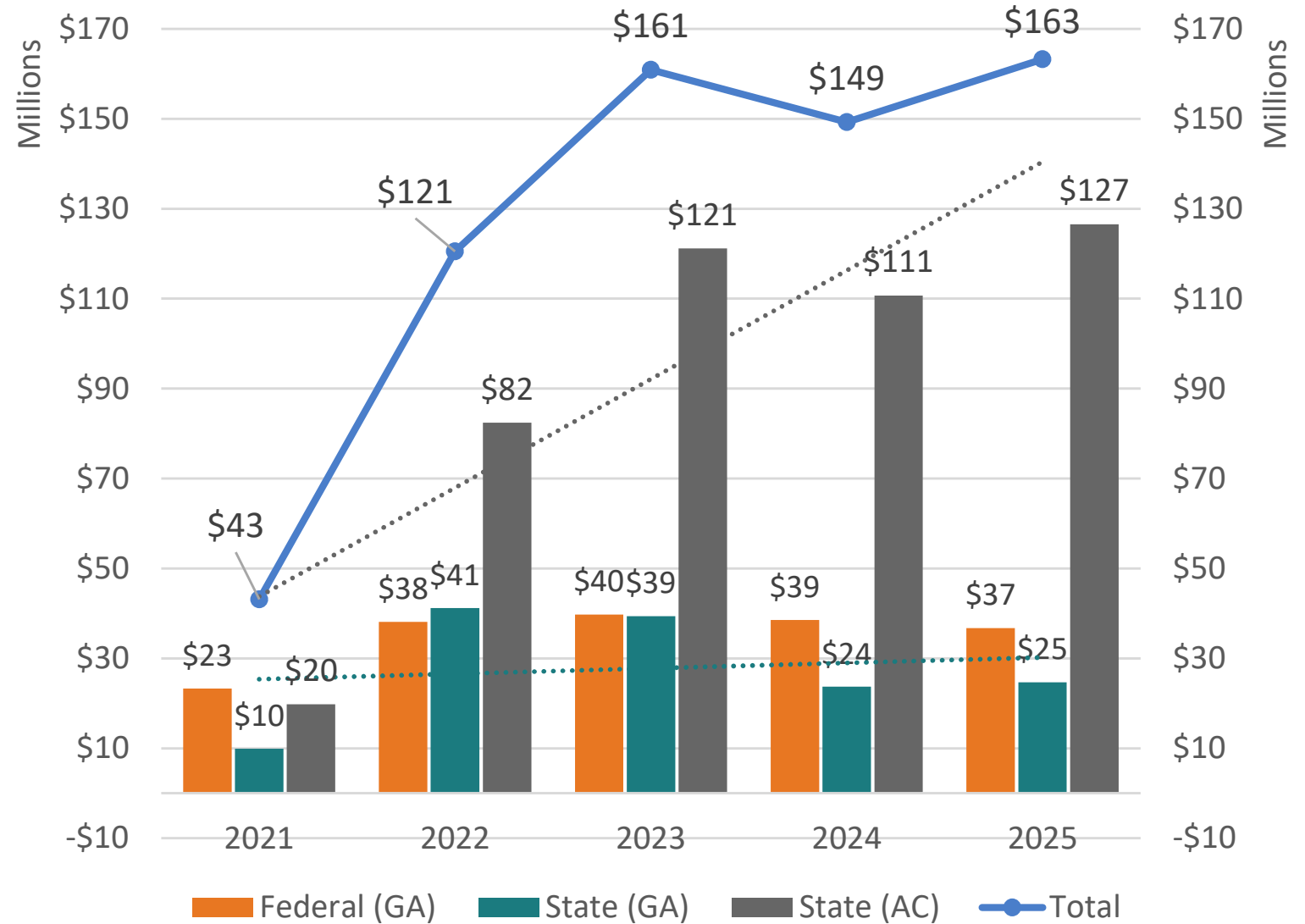
Maximizing revenue:

298 Grants issued in FY25
Totaling \$191 M



All Funding Administered

- **Federal¹ (user fees)**
 - Formula
 - Competitive/Discretionary
 - Community Project Funding
- **State**
 - Aviation Fuel Tax (TEF)
 - Direct Appropriations
 - General Fund – Recurring and non-recurring
- **Local**
 - *varies, typically 5% match*



¹Does not include Federal to AC airports

State Aviation Funding Management

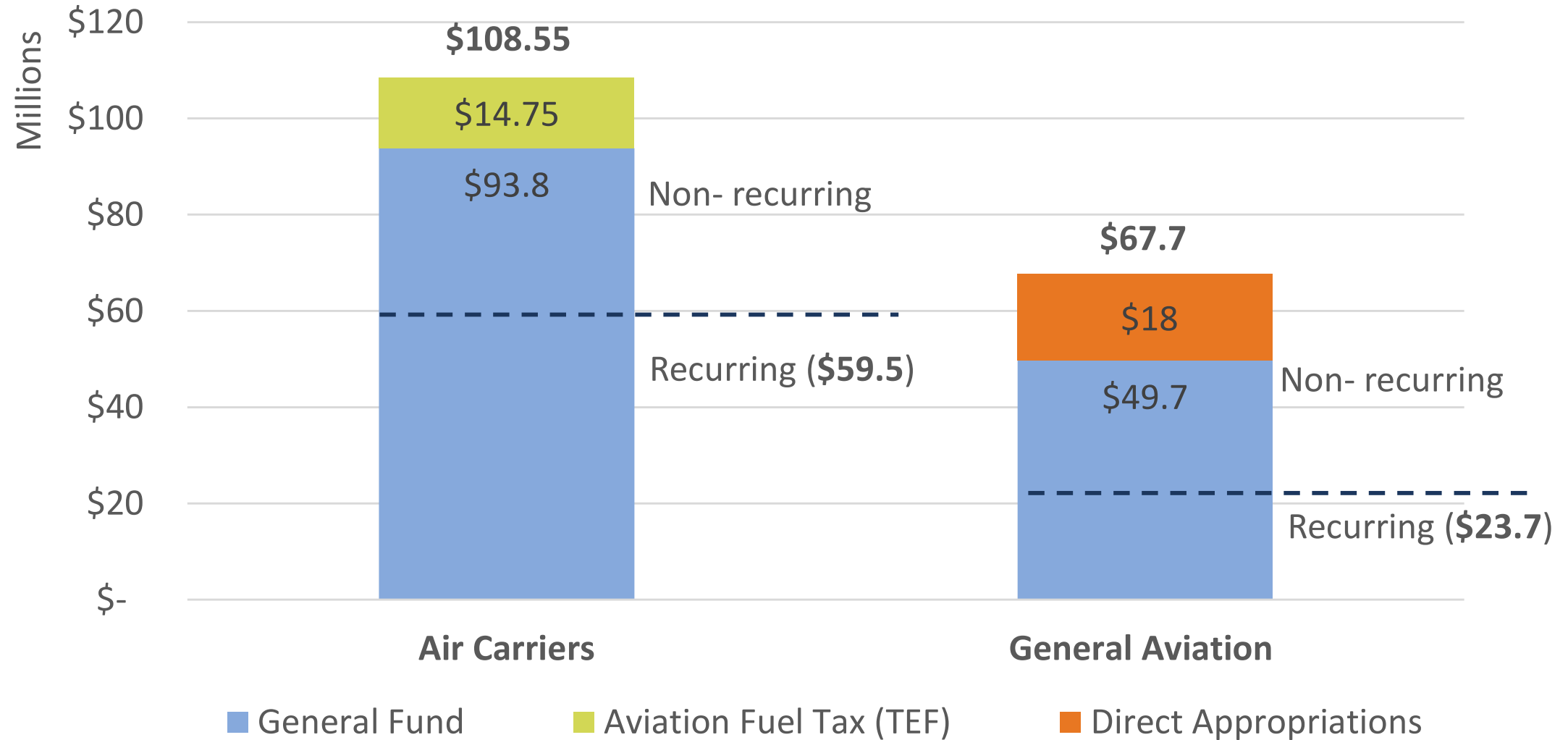
Air Carriers: By Formula

- Small Airport Stimulus (10%)
 - Taken off the top, split equally to CHA, TRI, and TYS.
- Economic Impact (90%)
 - Divided based on % of economic impact.

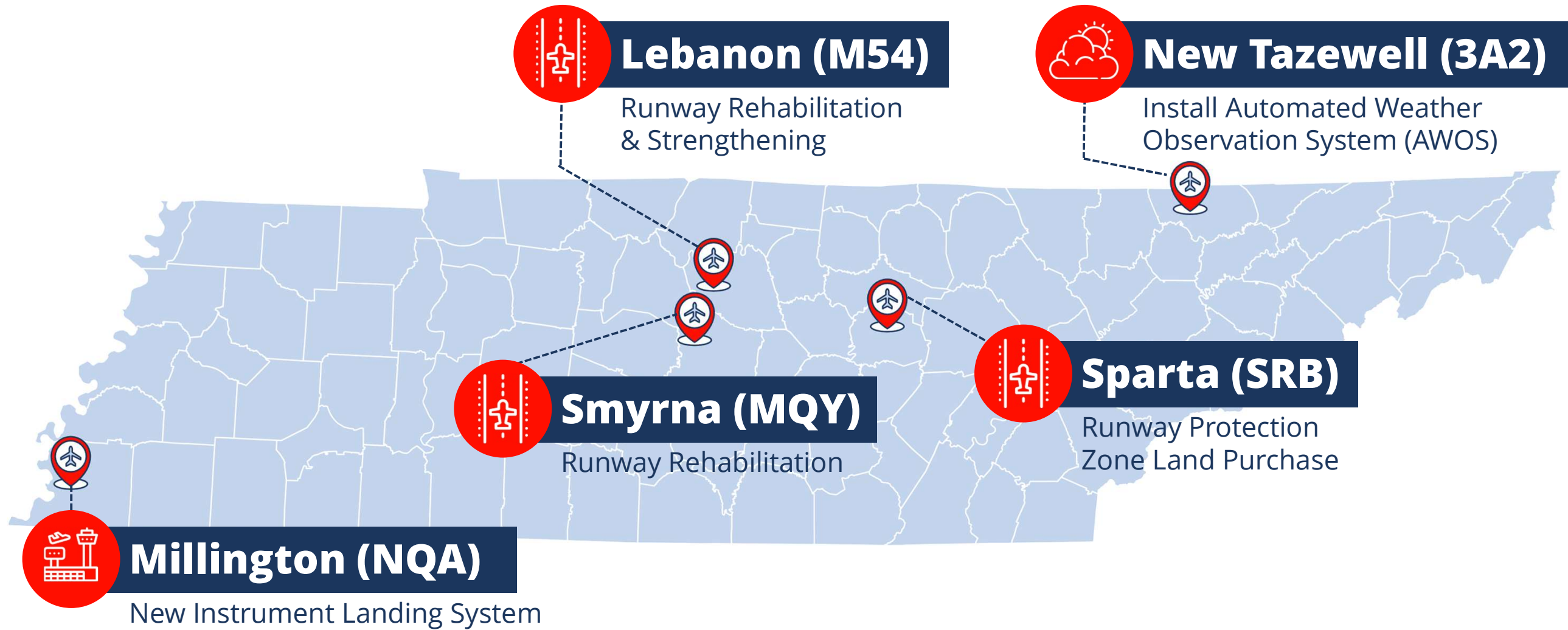
General Aviation:

- Direct Appropriations
- Program Management
- Matching FAA dollars (5%)
- Statewide Programs
- AIP Programming
 - TAC approves ACIP annually
 - Projects are scored using State Priority Rating (SPR) formula

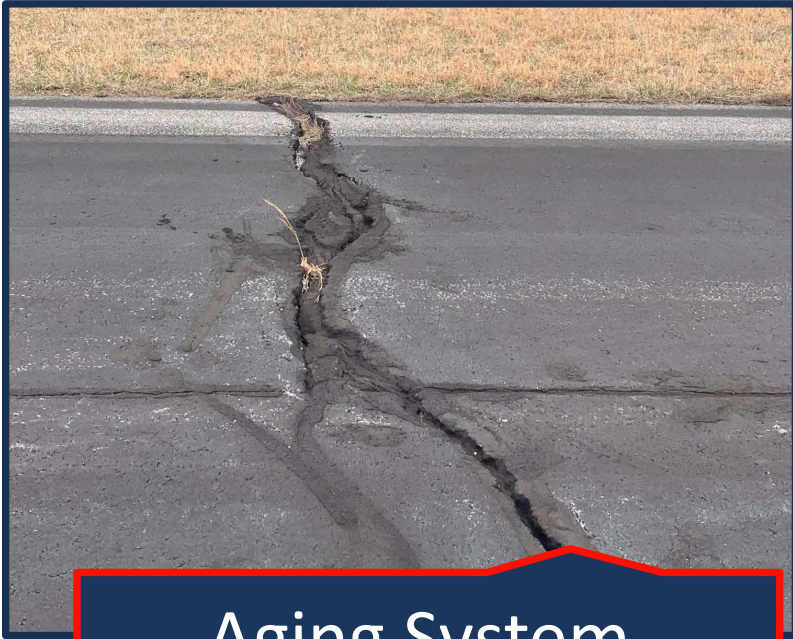
FY26 State Funding for Aviation



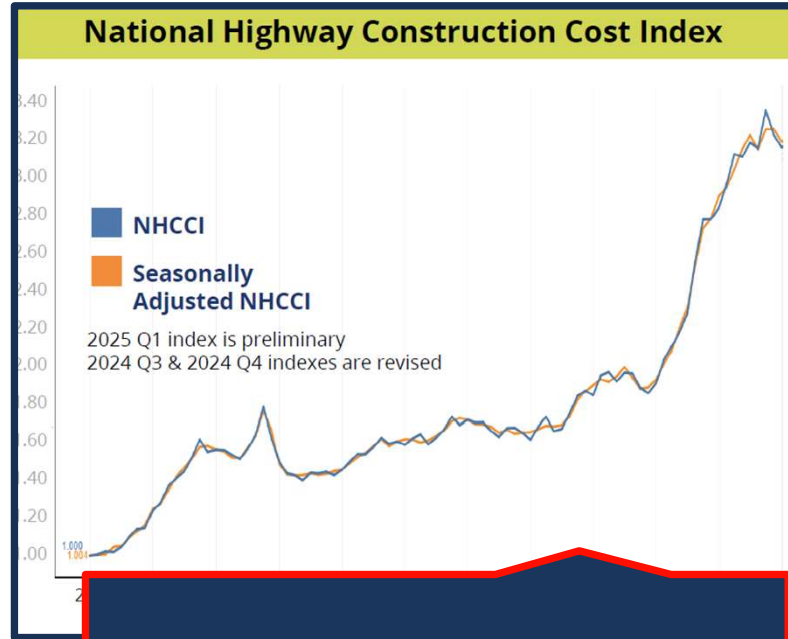
Additional Appropriations Helped Fund:



Challenges



Aging System,
Increasing demands



Inflation



Growing Needs

Emerging Technology Integration



Drones



Advanced Air
Mobility (AAM)



Commercial Space
Transport



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Thank You

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