

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 12, 2021

Steve Dickson, Administrator
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration
Office of the Administrator
800 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Dickson:

I write to bring your attention to the affordable housing and homelessness crises in Washington State, and the actions that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) can take to mitigate them. Understanding that making adjustments to residential uses of federally deeded airport property may require a statutory change, I invite you to work with me to enable property near the Olympia Regional Airport to be used to house constituents experiencing homelessness in Thurston County, Washington.

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically worsened the already troubling housing emergency in the South Sound, and the OYO Hotel Olympia – Tumwater, located in Washington's 10th Congressional District, could provide relief. The Thurston County Housing Authority (TCHA) stands ready to convert the hotel into residential units to serve some of the hundreds of individuals currently sleeping in their vehicles, on our streets, or in the woods. The Port of Olympia, the airport sponsor and landowner of where the hotel sits, is unable to facilitate this transfer to TCHA. Without explicit approval from the FAA, this transfer could be seen as incompatible use of airport land and jeopardize the Port's eligibility for federal funding as an airport sponsor. FAA has the authority to find certain on-airport dwellings acceptable, and I urge you to consider the OYO Hotel Olympia – Tumwater for this designation.

While it is clear that noise, safety, liability, and security considerations should be given primacy, the use of this federally deeded property as an important mitigant of our housing crisis must be strongly considered. I encourage you to work with my office on potential solutions to this pressing issue—it is one that we cannot ignore. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress