

VERONICA ESCOBAR
16TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

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DEPUTY WHIP
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CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS
NEW DEMOCRAT COALITION

January 21, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

As you know, last year President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) into law, marking a once-in-a-generation investment in our nation's infrastructure. Included in this bill is robust funding for air traffic control (ATC) facilities, funding which could prove instrumental for facilities like the one at the El Paso International Airport, which serves as a gateway to West Texas and southern New Mexico.

When it comes to aviation safety, it is critical for ATC towers to have a full view of the airfield while also ensuring air traffic controllers are able to work in a safe and accommodating structure. Unfortunately, after visiting the El Paso International ATC tower multiple times and speaking with both air traffic controllers and airport officials, it is clear that the El Paso ATC tower is failing in both categories. At the moment, the tower has numerous line of sight deficiencies that do not allow air traffic controllers to have a full view of some of our busiest runways.

Additionally, because the tower was built over 50 years ago, it has many of the issues one would expect from a building that has not been significantly updated since its construction. It has inefficient plumbing, a heating and cooling system that is faltering, ineffective communication lines for air traffic controllers, and the tower itself contains asbestos. A new ATC tower for the El Paso International Airport with updated technology and infrastructure as well as a better line of sight position will allow our air traffic controllers to do their jobs both safely and effectively. That is why I urge you to give your full and fair consideration, consistent with applicable laws and regulations, towards allocating funding from the IIJA to a new ATC tower at the El Paso International Airport.

Thank you for your attention and I look forward to continuing to work with you as we deliver 21st century infrastructure to the border region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Veronica Escobar". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Veronica" being more prominent than the last name "Escobar".

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

CC:

FAA Administrator Steve Dickson

Mayor Mitch Landrieu, Senior Advisor and Infrastructure Coordinator