

## **Rhode Island Airport Corporation Seeks Legislative Assistance on Runway Safety Issue at Green**

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**Warwick, Rhode Island, February 7, 2002:** In order to comply with Federal Safety requirements, the Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC) is sponsoring legislation that would place final approval of any wetland issues on the grounds of T.F. Green Airport squarely with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM).

The legislation, scheduled to be introduced today, seeks to amend Section 2-1-21 of the General Laws in Chapter 2-1 entitled Agricultural Functions of Department of Environmental Management, Part 2-1-13. The amendment would exempt any project on land owned or leased to the state, a state agency or a governmental agency from City Council approval.

Passage of the legislation would allow the Airport Corporation to make improvements - mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) - to the shorter of its two runways at Green, known as the crosswind runway. The runway is currently 6100 feet in length, and to meet minimum safety requirements, it must have a safety zone of 1000 feet on each end of the runway. The addition of the safety zones would occur over wetland property on the grounds of T.F. Green Airport.

According to Michael Cheston, Executive Director of the Airport Corporation, the legislation is critical to the continued safety on the runways at T.F. Green Airport. "We have a situation where the FAA has directed that the crosswind runway at Green must provide a safety

zone on each end of the runway to adhere to federal safety guidelines, and failure to do so may result in significantly reducing the existing length rendering it unusable for jet aircraft,” he explained. “ That is a disservice to our 5.5 million passengers and to the pilots, who need a safe alternative when using our facility during certain weather conditions. It is for these reasons that we are seeking state assistance for what is clearly a statewide issue of concern.”

Cheston continued, “Even before the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, our priority at Green Airport has been safety, first and foremost. It is our responsibility to provide pilots, who use this airport, with much needed flexibility during take-offs and landings under variable wind conditions. RIAC stands ready to meet or exceed the regulatory environmental and safety mandates as we work through the process.”

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