

WASHINGTON – On July 15, a provision supported by U.S. Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich and U.S. Representative Ben Ray Luján to secure funding for the Four Corners Regional Airport in Farmington was signed into law as a part of the bill reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration.

Udall pushed for the provision in the Senate bill, which Heinrich supported, to ensure that Four Corners will be eligible for full Airport Improvement Program funding in fiscal year 2017. After the Senate passed its FAA reauthorization legislation in April, Luján pushed for the provision's inclusion in any final legislation considered by the U.S. House of Representatives.

AIP is a critical source of funding that helps airports maintain air service facilities and make necessary upgrades. The FAA reauthorization bill provides \$1 million per year for airports that see more than 10,000 passengers per year.

Udall, a member of the Senate Commerce Committee, pushed for a provision to create a temporary exception for the Four Corners airport and others like it that have recently experienced a decline in passenger numbers. Farmington went from more than 14,000 passengers in 2013 to fewer than 6,000 in 2014; this exception ensures that Farmington will remain eligible for crucial AIP funding in the next fiscal year.

"Small and rural airports across New Mexico provide a critical link for our rural communities—but while many small carriers are cutting back flights, airports like the Four Corners Regional Airport still need funding for essential maintenance and upgrades," Udall said. "After hearing from Farmington Mayor Tommy Roberts, I worked with the Senate Commerce Committee to ensure the FAA reauthorization allowed Four Corners Regional Airport to be eligible for full AIP funding in the next fiscal year. This funding is a step forward and we will keep working to support rural air service at the Four Corners Regional Airport and others like it across New Mexico."

"I'm proud to have worked with my colleagues to secure this provision in the final FAA agreement," Heinrich said. "This ensures the Four Corners Regional Airport will receive full Airport Improvement Program funding for the next fiscal year. This federal investment supports critical safety enhancements, efficiency improvements and facility upgrades. The air service industry in Northwestern New Mexico contributes to the local economy and plays an important

## **Udall, Heinrich, Luján, secure funding for Farmington airport in FAA reauthorization**

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role in supporting commerce in the state.”

“The Airport Improvement Program provides a vital source of funding to small airports that contribute to the economy of their region,” Luján said. “I know how important AIP has been to the Four Corners Regional Airport by supporting efforts to ensure that it continues to serve the people of San Juan County safely and effectively. That is why I am so pleased that our efforts have ensured that the airport will continue to be eligible for these essential funds in the next fiscal year.”

The provision was included in the FAA reauthorization bill when it was considered by the Senate Commerce Committee. The legislation was signed into law by President Obama.