



## The Delaware River and Bay Authority

# MEDIA STATEMENT

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For Immediate Release

James Salmon  
302.571.6409

### **DRBA Responds to New Castle County's Announcement of the New Castle –Wilmington Airport Task Force**

On June 30, 2025, the initial 30 year term of the lease between the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) and New Castle County (NCC) governing the operation, use, and development of the New Castle – Wilmington Airport (ILG) will expire. As allowed in the agreement between the parties, it is expected that NCC would want to review its options beyond 2025, including an examination of DRBA's financial stake in the County's asset.

On August 1, 2019, NCC served notice to DRBA as provided for in the Lease between the parties requesting "a detailed statement of the amounts and obligations comprising the Lessor's (NCC) Termination Payment" to the Lessee (DRBA) upon termination. Accordingly, DRBA will furnish the audited results of the calculated repayment information to NCC no later than October 30, 2019.

In 1995 when the DRBA assumed the role of Airport Sponsor (operator and manager of ILG) at the New Castle – Wilmington Airport (ILG), the airport was struggling both financially and operationally to meet FAA certification standards. With the signing of the lease, the Authority assumed payment of approximately \$7 million of airport related debt, \$500,000+ for airport related equipment, and compensated the NCC Economic Development Corporation \$250,000 delivered in monthly payments over a 30 month period. The DRBA also freed NCC and the taxpayers of all future airport related expenses – operational and capital – that would be required to promote business growth and aviation success at the airport

Between 1995 and 2018, the DRBA invested approximately \$139 million for capital improvements and equipment. Working closely with Delaware's Congressional delegation and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the DRBA has secured more than \$75 million in federal matching grants for airfield equipment and safety improvements at the Airport. In addition, the DRBA self-funded major airport improvement projects such as a new state of the art Airport Traffic Control Tower (ATCT), ten (10) new corporate hangars, a new \$5.1 million paint hangar for Dassault-Falcon Jet, and most recently a \$4.4 million renovated and expanded public parking lot serving both terminal users and an exclusive area for the customers and employees of Flight Safety International.

Collectively, these investments have paid huge dividends as the airport is the home to more than 60 based corporate jet aircraft, the largest such concentration in the mid-Atlantic region.

A 2018 economic impact study commissioned by DelDOT confirmed that New Castle – Wilmington Airport is a major employer and economic force. It employs 1,600 workers directly, engages another 700 indirectly, and generates \$105 million in salaries paid. The airport's total annual contribution to the Delaware economy tops more than \$240 million, delivering \$10 million in state and local taxes.

The DRBA has the same goal as New Castle County (NCC) Executive Matt Meyer – to stimulate job creation and economic growth at the New Castle - Wilmington Airport.