



Ministerial Statement to the House of Assembly

Update on Department of Airport Operation Airspace Initiative

By

The Hon. Shawn G. Crockwell, JP, MP
Minister of Tourism Development and Transport

Friday, 13th February, 2015

Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform this Honourable House of a meeting I attended in London in December of last year 2014 to present to officials from the U.K. Department for Transport, the summary findings of the Bermuda Approach Control and Airspace Modernization Feasibility Study.

Mr. Speaker, in December, 2013, the Department of Airport Operations (DAO) entered into an agreement with Boeing Digital Aviation, a business division of aviation giants, Boeing, to study the management and further modernization of Bermuda's Airspace. The study, completed in August of last year, outlined a multi-year plan that would see Bermuda collaborating with the FAA to become a certified Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP). This certification would allow Bermuda to expand its area of airspace for Air Traffic Control management services from its present 5-mile radius, out to as much as 50 miles and potentially out further at a much later stage.

The study identified opportunities to accelerate the already fast pace Bermuda has taken in modernizing its air traffic management system by developing Performance Based Navigation (PBN) procedures for arriving and departing traffic. This enhanced modernization shall enable airlines to realize greater efficiencies and improved operational safety. Many advanced types of commercial aircraft, including those manufactured by Boeing and flown here every day, stand to optimize their in-flight navigational performance capabilities when traversing through Bermuda's advanced airspace.

Mr. Speaker, this collaboration with Boeing represents the latest example of a continuous commitment to enhancing and modernizing the airspace surrounding the L.F. Wade International Airport. In 2011, the Airport implemented the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to create more precise, safer, and fuel-efficient landing approaches for aircraft arriving in Bermuda, which at the time, placed it in line with a comprehensive overhaul initiative by the FAA to modernize America's aging and congestive national airspace.

The initiative, known as NextGen, is designed to make air travel to and within the United States, more convenient and dependable, while ensuring flights are as safe, secure and hassle-free as possible. The plan ensures better air traffic control, greater fuel savings, and enhanced operational safety. These are factors that are all paramount in today's aviation environment.

Mr. Speaker, the 2011 project was followed by the first-phase completion in November 2013, of a multi-million dollar project that required the adjustment of the approach angle over Ferry Reach to Runway 1-2. This was necessary in order to comply with newly introduced regulatory safety requirements as specified by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO pronounced "I-K-O"). You'll recall Mr. Speaker that the project also included the installation of enhanced taxiway and runway signage; and high intensity, L-E-D runway centerline lighting.

Mr. Speaker, these recent capital investments have laid the foundation for us to move forward with this collaborative undertaking with Boeing to further modernize our airspace and increase the area over which Bermuda-based Air Traffic Controllers will manage. This latest initiative will usher in the introduction of PBN procedures for both arriving and departing Bermuda traffic. Once again, GPS navigation technology will be used to ensure that aircraft utilizing Bermuda's airspace fly more efficiently; more economically; more precisely; and with greater operational safety.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda's airspace is of strategic and operational importance to the United States National Airspace System (NAS) and is presently controlled by the FAA. For Bermuda to assume control of its airspace, we must move from the basic Air Traffic Control Tower function currently in place to a more dynamic operation. There are significant costs in doing so that involve planning and execution related

to the installation of automation systems; equipment and infrastructure upgrades; management; staffing; training; and the expansion of existing facilities.

Concurrently, by providing certified Air Traffic Management services for users of our airspace, Bermuda is entitled to recoup the associated costs via user charges and implement a continuous improvement plan for its air navigation infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, in December of last year, I travelled to London accompanied by the Airport General Manager, Mr. Aaron Adderley, the Director of Civil Aviation, Mr. Thomas Dunstan, Air Operations Manager, Mr. Bob Withers and a senior management official from Boeing-Jeppesen; to present to officials from the U.K. Department for Transport, the summary findings of the Bermuda Approach Control and Airspace Modernization Feasibility Study.

The UK delegation included the Deputy Director for the Department for Transport and the CEO of Airspace Safety Support International (ASSI pronounced "ASS-SEE"), a subsidiary of the U.K Civil Aviation Authority responsible for overseeing aviation regulatory compliance by Overseas Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that following our presentation, the UK DIT offered its full support of the Bermuda Airspace initiative, acknowledging that the UK anticipated Bermuda would look to assume management of its own Terminal Airspace from the FAA, when it was willing and able to do so.

Mr. Speaker, by assuming management of our airspace and expanding its modernization through PBN, we are able to create more career paths and job opportunities for Bermudians in what is an exciting and fast-paced industry. With the support of the UK, our next step is to move forward in close cooperation with the FAA through the comprehensive road map provided in the Boeing Feasibility Study. The objective is to have expanded PBN operations in support of the anticipated increase in flight operations surrounding the upcoming America's Cup events. The UK DfT has asked that we continue to keep them abreast as we move forward.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

ENDS