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**BAUCUS TOUTS NEXTGEN JOB-CREATION BENEFITS, CONSUMER PROTECTIONS**  
*Finance Chairman Calls for Quick Passage of Bill to Implement New NextGen GPS Technology, Examines State of Aviation Trust Fund*

**Washington, DC** – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) explored the potential for job creation, improved safety and reduced travel delays that could be realized from investments in NextGen, the new, satellite-based air traffic system, at a hearing today. Baucus has long worked to pass a long-term extension of the fund to provide the resources the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) needs to improve air travel and modernize America’s airports, while supporting jobs throughout the air travel industry.

**“We cannot afford to neglect our aviation infrastructure,”** said Baucus. **“Modernizing our runways and air-traffic control will improve safety, protect consumers and create jobs. Modern and efficient aviation will reduce travel delays, lower costs and improve access to rural communities, including those in my home state of Montana.”**

An FAA-commissioned report issued last year found flight delays cost the U.S. economy \$32.9 billion in 2007. By 2030, the U.S. air-traffic system will handle an estimated 191,000 flights every day – an increase of 49,000 flights daily – and 1 billion passengers a year.

The Airport and Airway Trust Fund supports the FAA’s programs and activities, including the implementation of the NextGen satellite air traffic network, which will replace outdated radar systems. Baucus touted NextGen, the new GPS-based air traffic system, as a way to improve air safety and efficiency while advancing U.S. competitiveness and creating jobs. Reauthorizing the FAA legislation, with investments in NextGen, is estimated to create 280,000 jobs in airports throughout the country.

**“NextGen’s precision will allow us to significantly upgrade our aviation infrastructure and better use our airspace. Implementation of the NextGen system is critical for millions of air passengers’ safety, for jobs and for advancing U.S. competitiveness,”** said Baucus.

The Senate passed an FAA reauthorization bill last year by a 93-0 vote, but the bill expired when the 111th Congress adjourned. Congress will have to pass a new bill in the 112th Congress before the trust fund can be reauthorized.

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