



February 24, 2026

Florida Department of Commerce
107 E Madison St – MSC 400
Tallahassee, FL 32399-6508

To Whom It May Concern:

The leasehold infrastructure at the Lake City Airport has operated as a Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility performing heavy commercial and military aircraft maintenance continuously for more than 60 years. In the early 1960's it operated under the banner of the Georgia-based Aero Corporation. Then, in the late 1990's, Aero was acquired by TIMCO. In 2018, TIMCO was acquired by HAECO and, recently, HAEO was acquired by AAR Corporation.

Regardless of which entity name is on the lease, I think it is fair to say that this leasehold infrastructure belongs to the North Florida Community and the tens of thousands of North Floridians who have repaired aircraft here.

The impact of this facility on the community over the last 60 years has been significant in terms of the local economy, careers, families, state and local fiscal contributions and investment in the community.

The construction of a central accumulation building along with the upgrade to our wastewater system was the first phase of \$20 million of leasehold improvements we have planned through 2027 – including new roofs and fire suppression throughout the facility, employee breakroom renovation and electrical upgrades. These improvements are focused on increasing our capacity to meet market demand.

We anticipate this investment will result in the retention of our present 525-member workforce. We project the average hourly wage for these new positions will be \$26.50.

I would also like to highlight another AAR capital investment – our workforce. AAR is committed to hiring and training local North Floridians. This has always been a part of the Lake City business model. Each year we hire a significant number of entry-level employees for the sole purpose of offering them a career in the aviation industry. Some are transitioning from other industries, and some are just starting their employment journey. Through our Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), our On-the-job training (OJT), and our mentorship program, we offer these employees the opportunity to build a career in aviation. Our commitment to this

capital investment has been evident throughout our history and is a key to our success going forward.

Thank you for your consideration of the city's request for infrastructure funding. I'm sure you will agree that this facility demonstrates the kind of proven track record that lends confidence to the projected returns on this investment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Th. D. Hoferer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Thomas D. Hoferer

SVP, Repair & Engineering