§ 2799-bbb. Statement of legislative findings and purpose. The legislature hereby finds and declares as follows:

1. The economic well-being of the state and the general welfare of its people require adequate, safe, secure and efficient aviation and transportation facilities at a reasonable cost to the people.

2. The strengthening and improvement of aviation facilities and related services for the central part of the state is a matter of vital importance not only to the residents of central New York but to all the state's residents and is therefore a matter of state concern.

3. In order to ensure a healthy economy for such area and to promote the general welfare of its residents, it is necessary to expand and improve the existing aviation facilities and services in the central New York region in such a manner as to stimulate and promote increased local, state, national and international air travel and commerce throughout central New York.

4. The health, welfare, safety and security of the state's residents and of those passengers using air transportation requires coordinated operation of aviation facilities and services in the central New York region by a public benefit airport authority.

5. The purposes of such authority shall be:

(a) to stimulate and promote economic development, trade and tourism;

(b) to acquire, construct, reconstruct, continue, develop, equip, expand, improve, maintain, finance and operate aviation and other related facilities and services within central New York;

(c) to promote safe, secure, efficient and economical air transportation by preserving and enhancing airport capacity;

(d) to form an integral part of a safe and effective nationwide system of airports to meet the present and future needs of civil aeronautics and national defense and to assure inclusion of the authority's facilities in state, national and international programs for air transportation and for airport or airway capital improvement, all in accordance with the provisions of this title; and

(e) to ensure that aviation facilities authorized pursuant to this title shall provide for the protection and enhancement of the natural resources and the quality of the environment of the state and the central New York area.

6. Such purposes are in all respects public purposes for the benefit of the people of the state of New York and for which public funds may be expended and both the city of Syracuse and the authority in carrying out their respective powers and duties under this title shall be deemed to be acting in a governmental capacity. The acquisition, construction, reconstruction, development, expansion, improvement, equipping, operation and maintenance of any project financed or undertaken by the authority or the city shall be deemed to be the performance of an essential governmental function by the authority or the city acting in its governmental capacity, whether such project shall be owned or operated by the authority or by any person or public corporation.

7. It is hereby found and declared that it has been and remains the policy of the state of New York to promote equal opportunity in employment for all persons, without discrimination on account of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual preference, age, disability or marital status, to promote equality of economic opportunity for minority group members and women, and business enterprises owned by them, and to eradicate the effects of private and governmental discrimination which has erected and continues to maintain barriers that unreasonably impair access by minority and women-owned business enterprises to state contract opportunities. For the purpose of furthering the state's compelling interest in eradicating the effects of racial and sexual discrimination, therefore, it is necessary and proper that article fifteen-a of the executive law, concerning participation by minority group members and women and business enterprises owned by them, shall apply to the Syracuse regional airport authority.