



## Chair's Message

When we published the previous issue of *The Air & Space Lawyer*, we were only a few months into the COVID-19 crisis. We have all experienced quite challenging months not only as we cope and adapt to the changes brought about by the novel coronavirus but also as we reflect on recent events and seek out ways we can combat racism. It is time for us to double down on the Forum's long-standing commitment to supporting the aviation sector through difficult times and to creating a more diverse, inclusive, equitable, and just environment for our members, for the Forum, and for all.

The Forum has always been an organization that has strived for equality, diversity, and inclusion—in every sense of those words. Like Forum chairs before me and with the support of our Diversity Liaison, Abby Bried, and our ABA Forum Manager, Dawn Holiday, the Forum strives to provide opportunities for all voices to be heard. To succeed in this, we must be intentional and proactive about providing opportunities to our lawyers of color, LGBTQ+ lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, women lawyers, and other lawyers often discriminated against due to religion and socioeconomics.

We can and should do better. The Forum always ensures that we meet the ABA's diversity guidelines, and I challenge us as an organization to do more. Let us together look for ways to mentor, develop, and use our privilege to provide opportunities that foster equality, diversity, and inclusion within the Forum and beyond. I challenge Forum members to seek out ways to partner with each other across our organizations to work together to combat racism and promote diversity and inclusion in the aviation sector.

As many of you are aware, the Forum works closely with the ABA's Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Council. I echo the Council's reminder to each of us that shifts in our work dynamics as a result of the pressures of the COVID-19 crisis will negatively impact minorities and that pipeline-building and mentorship programs often backslide. Each of us has the power to foster specific strategies that help underrepresented people during times of uncertainty. I challenge each of you within your own work teams to help ensure that work and profile-raising opportunities are being allocated equitably across backgrounds;

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make sure that capacity or workforce shift conversations do not have a disproportionate impact on underrepresented people; and have bias interrupters/advocates/D&I leaders at the table keep diversity top of mind and stand in the gap for those who are underrepresented.

We are excited for the Forum's upcoming Annual Conference and Meeting to be held September 9–11, 2020. The agenda is packed with the aviation thought leaders and will focus on the impacts of the pandemic on the industry, as well as provide critical insights into the recovery and renewal of the industry in the months and years ahead. As we announced in February and for the first time, our Annual Conference will feature a session focusing on equality, inclusion, and diversity within the aviation sector. The session also recognizes the new requirements many state bar associations now place on legal education, and my hope is that we continue these sessions in years to come.

The conference will be 100-percent virtual, and we will be using state-of-the-art technology to deliver an engaging, interactive experience for all of our members. We recognize that the pandemic has had a disproportionate economic impact on the aviation sector and our members, and with deep appreciation for our long-time sponsors and members, we are pleased that the Annual Conference and Meeting will be free to all members of the Forum. I encourage each of you to reach out to one person whose voice might not normally be heard and invite and encourage him or her to participate in the Forum and speak up during the virtual panels. This is one small way each of you can promote diversity and inclusion.

In addition to the Annual Meeting, each of our eight committees—Space, Drones, Airports, General Aviation, Finance, Consumer Protection, Cargo, and Sustainability—will be holding free-to-members meetings during the month of September. If you have not signed up for a committee yet, please visit <https://connect.americanbar.org/home> to find committees that will offer you opportunities to get involved and interact with other members who share your interests.

As always, please reach out to me at [jennifer.trock@bakermckenzie.com](mailto:jennifer.trock@bakermckenzie.com) or 202-452-7055 if you have questions, want to get involved, or just want to connect. I'd love to hear from you.

**Jennifer Trock**

Chair, Forum on Air and Space Law