



Chair's Message

This has been a year of firsts for the Forum, including the Forum's first-ever, all-virtual Annual Meeting, which by all accounts was a real success. Special thanks to Co-Chairs Leslie Abbott and David Heffernan and to Forum Manager Dawn Holiday for helping us attain a record turnout and one of our best substantive programs ever. For those who missed it, it's not too late—the program remains available for online viewing (and CLE credit) free of charge.

We heard from many at our meeting about the unprecedented historical challenges facing the very core of the aviation sector as it works to survive and emerge from the global pandemic. Yet our industry is one of resilience and strength, and we also heard about how airlines, airports, and regulators throughout the world are all working tirelessly to ensure that the industry will be ready and able to reconnect businesses, friends, and loved ones across the globe. While it will take time, I am confident the industry will adapt, innovate, and reinvent itself to be more robust and resilient than ever.

The Forum continues to find ways to connect our members and provide leadership and engagement opportunities during this time of remote work and reduced travel. Our committee chairs did a fantastic job of organizing post-Annual Meeting virtual sessions on everything from space debris to charter aircraft rules. Let us all thank them for their hard work and commitment to engaging with members in their areas of interest and practice.

We also continue to focus on developing the next generation of aviation and space lawyers and on promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. Our Young Lawyer Liaison, Mary Caitlin Ray, hosted a fun, interactive happy hour during the Annual Meeting. And our program included our first diversity and inclusion plenary panel led by Diversity Committee Co-Chairs Abby Bried and Jamie Rodriguez. In this issue, Abby and Jamie provide a great overview of Diversity Committee initiatives, as well as those of the larger ABA. As I've mentioned, it is incumbent upon each of us to foster diversity, inclusion, and equality, and I'm proud of the Forum's efforts to lead the way.

As a reminder, you can sign up for any of our committees—Space, Drones, General Aviation, Airports, Finance, Cargo, Sustainability, Consumer Protection/Competition, and Diversity—on ABA Connect, which is where you can also view committee content. I encourage you to do so.

While the virtual format was a huge success, virtual meetings are an inadequate—but necessary—substitute for in-person gatherings. I know many of us long for the time when we can share a conversation over a nice dinner or cocktails and feel our collective energy under the same roof. I'm hopeful we'll be able to do so at our Fall 2021 Annual Meeting. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing you virtually, including at our February Update Conference.

Jennifer Trock

Chair, Forum on Air and Space Law

Jennifer Trock (jennifer.trock@bakermckenzie.com) chairs Baker McKenzie's North America International Commercial Practice Group, is a member of its Global Aviation Group in Washington, D.C., and leads the firm's unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) focus team.