

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 6, 2017

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2018 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to include language ensuring that the Federal Aviation Administration provides full funding to provide essential air traffic and safety support services at major aviation events around the country.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has the unique authority to manage the national airspace, which is not redundant or duplicative of any other Federal, state, local, or private effort. In keeping with this authority, FAA has the responsibility to provide air traffic control and safety support services in controlled airspace across the country. Occasionally, major aviation events create extremely demanding airspace environments requiring targeted additional FAA air traffic control resources to ensure the safe and efficient movement of aircraft.

In recent years, FAA has charged major aviation events for the air traffic services provided, ending a long standing policy to support these activities within its Operations budget. This is in spite of that fact that general aviation already pays its share of FAA air traffic services for all of its flight activities, including for all major aviation events, through the aviation fuel excise tax. In fact, general aviation will pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in fuel tax revenue generated specifically by flights associated with the movement of aircraft across the country to a single major aviation event alone.

This shift in policy by the FAA to charge fees for air traffic and safety support services is tantamount to an imposition of a new user fee on general aviation. Through the appropriations process, Congress has previously made clear its opposition to new user fees. As such, we urge you to include the following language under the FAA "Operations" heading:

The Committee instructs FAA to use existing funding as appropriated in the Operations budget to provide air traffic control and safety support services at major aviation events hosted annually for the general aviation community. The Committee recognizes that these services are paid for using the aviation fuel tax excise collected from general aviation users. Recognizing continual funding constraints, the Committee instructs FAA to utilize

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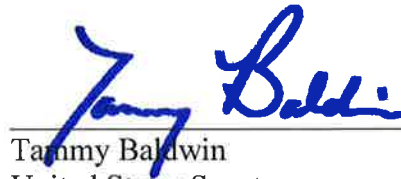
appropriate resources to maintain the safe and efficient movement of aircraft based on projected airspace congestion at major aviation events.

For the last 60 years, FAA has provided essential air traffic and safety support services to major aviation events. Without FAA's air traffic control and safety support services, major aviation events will begin to shutdown, resulting in significant negative economic impacts to the general aviation community. We look forward to working with you to ensure FAA adequately budgets for major aviation events.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator