



June 5, 2015

United States Senate  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Member of Congress:

As you debate changes to our air transportation system in the coming months as part of FAA reauthorization, we write to ask you to protect the needs and interests of rural communities.

There are over 5000 airports around our country, and the vast majority of these airports are used by general aviation and not served by commercial airlines. These aircraft and airports support the transport of patients to critical care, aide in protecting crops, fire-fighting, search-and-rescue, law enforcement, and many other critical services for communities around the country. They help to support the transport of our nation's blood supply, they provide supplies in the aftermath of natural disasters, and they allow patients and veterans to be reunited with their families.

For businesses around the country, and particularly those based in rural areas, general aviation and access to a local airport also means the difference between success and failure. Companies of all sizes use business aircraft to transport tools, supplies and to reach customers in far off markets. They are used to survey and repair power lines, and they help farms survey and monitor crops and cattle. In fact, roughly 71 million acres of cropland are annually treated utilizing aerial application in the United States. Put simply, general aviation and our network of community airports are a lifeline to farms, businesses and rural communities around the nation, supporting millions of American jobs and billions in economic activity.

It is for all these reasons that as Congress debates changes to our air transportation system, that it is crucial that we protect the needs and interests of rural and small communities. Most importantly, we believe it is critical that Congressional oversight be

retained over our air transportation system, so that we ensure that the interests and needs of these communities be protected and represented in the system. We are particularly concerned about proposals to turn over authority over our air transportation system to any type of private board or entity, which would have the authority over funding mechanisms and taxes.

General aviation and our national network of airports are a vital part of our national infrastructure, our economy and a lifeline to small towns and rural communities around our nation. As you move forward in debating FAA reauthorization, we look forward to working with you to protect these communities and ensure that our air transportation system continues to operate safely, efficiently, and for the benefit of all Americans.

Sincerely,



Selena Shilad  
Executive Director  
Alliance for Aviation Across America



Roger Johnson  
President  
National Farmers Union



Niel Ritchie  
Executive Director  
League of Rural Voters



Rol Murrow  
President  
Air Care Alliance



Andrew Moore  
Executive Director  
National Agricultural Aviation Association