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July 1, 2015

United States Capitol  
East Capitol St NE & First St SE  
Washington, DC 20004

To The Honorable Senator Murray, Senator Cantwell, Senator Wyden, Senator Merkley, and the Honorable Representatives DelBene, Larsen, Herrera Beutler, Newhouse, McDermott, Reichert, Smith, Heck, Bonamici, Walden, Blumenauer, DeFazio, and Schrader:

In early June, U.S. Representative Bill Shuster alluded to the introduction of legislation before Congress that would create a new system of Air Traffic control, privatized and free of congressional oversight, and funded by user fees. We at the Pacific Northwest Business Aviation Association (PNBAA) write to you to express our deep concerns over these comments.

The unparalleled safety and public benefit of our air traffic control system is a testament to the oversight of our elected officials. To remove congressional oversight and place ATC in the hands of a private board of directors, representing their own special interests, would with certainty create inequities of access and cost for our members. Air Traffic Control is a vital public service, and as such should remain squarely within the oversight of our elected officials.

Further, ATC has long been funded by a consumption-based tax on aviation fuels; this funding mechanism is known to work, and administration of this user-based tax is proven to be cost-effective. The proposition to create an entirely new system, based on fees generated by the number of flights, creates potential for unforeseen inequity (where today's tax system is viewed as fair by those who pay the tax), while exposing the industry and public to risks inherent with establishing a new administrative framework to replace the existing fuel tax system. User fees would impose a tremendous administrative burden both on the government and on the businesses that utilize business aviation. We feel replacing a fuel-tax system that works for the industry and the general public is not a good use of resources, while it exposes everyone to unnecessary risk.

The PNBAA is a non-profit regional group of aviation professionals, dedicated to promoting the interests and recognition of the regional business aviation community in the Pacific Northwest. Our member group is comprised of over 220 small businesses, individuals, and corporations that utilize business aviation as a means to support the growth and prosperity of their enterprises. Business aviation is an essential tool that allows us to serve destinations far removed from airline service, respond to customers in a competitive manner, and develop business that otherwise would prove too labor intensive to pursue.

It is also important to note these important facts on business aviation, compiled by the Alliance for Aviation Across America:

- General (Business) Aviation has an economic impact exceeding \$3.1 billion in Washington State, and \$1.8 billion in Oregon;
- In 2012, General Aviation collectively employed more than 269,881 individuals in Washington and Oregon;
- Washington and Oregon have 220 public use, General Aviation airports that provide service to small communities, and relieve congestion from major airports.

If faced with new legislation for the funding and operation of our air traffic control system, please consider the potential impacts of the removal of oversight, and introduction of a system funded by user fees. Similar experiments have consistently failed in other countries, leading to the demise of an entire segment of the aviation industry. In the United States, we have an extraordinary system that promotes access and equality, a system for which we should feel proud.

The members of the Pacific Northwest Business Aviation Association from Washington and Oregon ask that you protect the public interest by saying no to user fees and privatizing our air traffic control system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lance Robertson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lance Robertson  
President  
Pacific Northwest Business Aviation Association