

Todd Meier  
Mayor



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January 4, 2012

The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our deep concern that your comments about general aviation in recent weeks and months have not only mischaracterized these aircraft and their crucial importance for our economy, but have suggested that the businesses and communities that depend on this form of transportation can afford an increased tax burden for general aviation operators. On behalf of over 100 communities in 48 states, we write to let you know that for thousands of towns and communities like ours around the country, general aviation is a vital part of our economy and national infrastructure, and we are extremely concerned about the repercussions of your statements on this important lifeline to communities around the nation.

General aviation supports 1.2 million American jobs, over \$150 billion in economic impact annually, and is a vital economic engine for our national economy. However, it is also a struggling industry. There has been a 15.5% drop in general aviation aircraft shipments, and billings for general aviation have dropped 22.3%. Since 2008, manufacturers have also laid off roughly 20,000 workers, which is additionally concerning given that the general aviation industry remains one of the only sectors in U.S. manufacturing that still contributes positively to the balance of trade.

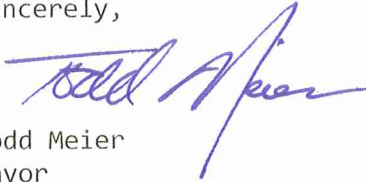
In addition, general aviation aircraft and the airports they utilize are a literal lifeline to our communities, providing access for business growth, law enforcement, disaster relief, medical care and other services. They are utilized to help transport blood and organs to residents in rural communities, reunite veterans back from overseas with their families, and help our companies to reach customers in markets that otherwise could not be reached.

As you know well, the vast majority of businesses and organizations that own and utilize general aviation are not wealthy CEOs. Rather, 85% are small to mid-sized businesses and organizations that rely on these aircraft to reach far-off plants and customers, serve rural markets without access to commercial aviation, or deliver medical care and other services. We can tell you firsthand that these aircraft are a crucial tool and resource for businesses in our communities; businesses that keep our communities afloat and help workers to be able to continue to put food on their table for their families.

Also concerning to us is the recent discussion of new "user fee" taxes on general aviation aircraft operators. These taxes would mean not only an additional tax burden, but a huge administrative burden on businesses, farms and organizations that use general aviation and that would have to literally keep track of invoices for fees for thousands of take-offs and landings. In addition, at a time when our government is supposed to be finding ways to reduce government spending, we do not understand why some in Congress seek to create huge, new bureaucracy within the FAA to administer these new taxes.

At such a vulnerable time for our economy, we need to be doing everything we can to support jobs and help to stimulate our economy, not crippling an important industry which represents a lifeline to communities such as ours around the nation. We stand ready to work with you on this and all issues related to local communities around the nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Todd Meier". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Todd Meier  
Mayor

cc: City Council