

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 28, 2009

**General Aviation Airports: A Reliable Network
for Small Businesses, Farmers, Doctors, and
Emergency Responders**

Dear Colleague:

In response to the *USA Today* article published on September 17, 2009, titled “Feds Keep Little Used Airports in Business (http://www.usatoday.com/travel/flights/2009-09-17-little-used-airports_N.htm),” we would like to share with you some important information.

As you know, the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) provides funding for the planning and development of “public-use” airports listed in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). Airports eligible for AIP funding must be included in the NPIAS which is determined by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Such airports are considered to be **significant to national air transportation**.


In addition to vastly improving commercial and general aviation safety, AIP funding is used to increase capacity, enhance security, and address environmental concerns at all of our nation’s airports; large, medium, and small. Further, AIP funding cannot be used to subsidize operational costs.

Without a comprehensive network of reliever (medium) and general aviation (small) airports, the hundreds of thousands of pilots, families, doctors, farmers, and businesses which rely on this network would be forced to operate solely from commercial (large) airports. Further, this would leave many communities without a vital lifeline for disaster relief efforts (such as the recent floods in the Midwest, fires out west, and hurricanes in the southeast) and other important emergency services which aviation access provides across America. To be clear, the end result would combine the operations of the smallest aircraft with the largest aircraft, ultimately decreasing safety, hampering disaster and emergency response capabilities, reducing capacity, and increasing congestion for all travelers.


Lastly, it is important to illustrate the distinction in AIP funding levels for large and small airports. Currently, every large airport eligible for AIP entitlement funding can receive a maximum of \$22 million annually. In comparison, small airports receive a maximum of \$150,000. We cannot stress enough the necessity of this funding for not only large and urban airports, but also for small and rural airports.

Again, thank you for taking the time to review this information. We hope you found it helpful and please feel free to contact us should you require further information.

Sincerely,




Sam Graves
Member of Congress



Vern Ehlers
Member of Congress



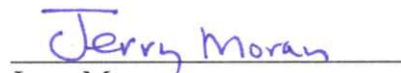
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