

Honorable Senator John Cornyn  
U.S. Senate  
517 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator John Cornyn:

I am writing to request that you strongly reject the terms calling for *user fees* on general aviation contained in S. 1300 “Aviation Investment and Modernization Act of 2007” and support any efforts to remove *user fee provisions* from this bill.

I am writing to you as a constituent and supporter. I am a commercial pilot of seven years and current flight instructor. I use the national airspace system for both business and pleasure. I also fly the airlines regularly. I cannot recommend that the airlines receive a tax break so that the small community of general aviation pilots are left to foot the bulk of expense. I agree that air traffic control needs modernization. And general aviation is willing to support that. But user fees are not the answer. In every country in which user fees have been implemented, general aviation has declined significantly. And the health of small, rural airports also declined. The economic ramifications of such things are large indeed. User fees in S. 1300 are not the best way to finance the FAA and modernize our national airspace system.

Congress is fully aware that private citizens and small businesses operate general aviation aircraft for personal, recreational, and business use. Often these small general aviation aircraft operations represent the most efficient, if not the only, means of access to air transportation in small and rural communities in our state. Such general aviation access is critical for our national commerce, emergency services, and the ability of businesses in our area to compete on an even playing field with companies in larger metropolitan centers; the only markets served by the major airlines.

*Protect the National Economy - Don't punish general aviation operators and thousands of small rural communities by imposing user fees as a means to reward the business failings of commercial airline companies.*

As Congress considers FAA reauthorization, the airlines are waging a war of misinformation – a massive deception to shift the costs of their failing business model and management practices onto general aviation and rural communities is being cloaked in urgent calls for modernizing the air traffic system and the purported need for additional revenue to fund these programs.

If user fees are implemented as a way of funding the FAA, the consequences would be too great to bear for many aspiring pilots. As it stands, flight training is already a very expensive undertaking. Some pilot schools are graduating students with six figure debts similar to law and medical schools. With user fees, this would skyrocket even further. Some aspiring pilots would no longer be qualified for the loan amounts, and their

freedom to fly would be stripped from them. This would undoubtedly send a ripple effect throughout the rest of aviation.

In experimental aviation, common, everyday people build airplanes for pleasure; even the middle-lower class. These people would also be stripped of their freedom to fly. They simply would not be able to afford to fly the airplane that they have been restoring for 10 years or more. This is unconscionable.

The present funding system for the world's largest and safest air traffic system is NOT broken. The Office of Management and Budget and the General Accounting Office agree that the existing system of fuel taxes and passenger facility charges will produce sufficient revenue to continue to fund the FAA and pay for modernization of the system provided that the system remains intact and the airlines are not afforded a massive tax cut.

The Airports and Airways Trust Fund revenues are at a record level and are projected to increase at a rate of approximately 6% annually for the next five years. The President's own FY 2008 budget estimates indicate there is adequate tax revenue to fully fund the Trust Fund. Conversely, the user fee proposal contained in S.1300 would generate nearly \$1 billion LESS revenue between 2008 and 2012 than would be raised under the current system while increasing taxes on general aviation and lining the pockets of the airlines with the additional proceeds and trust fund shortfall.

□ ***User fees are bad public policy and are not the way to fund a new system.*** *General aviation user fees reduce the level of flight activity thus reducing overall revenue, create an incentive for operators to avoid using safety enhancing services due to cost considerations, cost more for government to collect than the existing fuel taxes, and do not reflect the actual burden on the system of individual operators and classes of operators.*

□ ***The current system of excise taxes and the method of collection are extremely efficient.*** *The fuel taxes currently collected from general aviation are an extremely efficient means for government to collect revenue. Since the tax is paid at the pump, government need only collect from four or five fuel producing sources. User fees would require tracking, billing and collection for hundreds of thousands of transactions from tens of thousands of sources, an enormous and expensive bureaucratic exercise. Retain and increase the airline fuel tax at the same rate as proposed for general aviation as proposed in HR 2881 – don't cut them and sacrifice the system!*

□ ***The U.S. air transportation system is a critical national asset that benefits every citizen of this country.*** *Accordingly, every taxpayer and every user – including airlines – should pay their fair share to support it. The U.S. air transportation system and the pilots of the small general aviation aircraft who fly in it daily provide benefits to every citizen from mail service, fresh produce, and on-time and on-demand delivery of goods and services of every description, in addition to the freedom of movement enjoyed by all of us in this country.*

□ *User fees have proven time and again to be expensive, inefficient, and damaging to general aviation in every country in which they have been introduced. Canada, Germany, Australia, the U.K., the Netherlands, the Philippines, Austria, Israel, and many other nations have implemented user fees in one form or another — all with disastrous results for their general aviation communities.*

As S. 1300 moves to the floor, keep in mind the gravity of this issue. Thank you for your attention and time in this matter.

Sincerely,  
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