

April 15, 2010

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
2314 RHOB
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Fax 715/842-4488

**Similar letter sent to Congressmen Olver,
Lewis and Latham, and Senators Inouye, Murray,
Cochran and Bond**

Dear Chairman Obey:

As Congress begins work on the Department of Transportation/Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) fiscal year 2011 appropriations bill, the organizations listed below urge you to support funding of \$125.3 million for the regular FAA Contract Tower Program, as well as an additional \$10 million to be used for the continuation of the contract tower cost-sharing program. Full funding of the contract tower program will permit continuation of this important FAA safety program and allow additional non-towered airports to receive the vital safety benefits of a control tower.

The FAA Contract Tower Program has provided essential air traffic safety services since 1982. Currently, 245 smaller airports in 46 states participate in the program, including nine in Wisconsin. Together these 245 towers handle approximately 25 percent of all control tower aircraft operations in the U.S. Most importantly, the safety and efficiency record of the FAA Contract Tower Program for more than two decades has been validated numerous times by the DOT Inspector General (IG) and FAA safety audits, as well as by the National Transportation Safety Board.

All federal contract controllers are FAA-certified air traffic controllers who meet the identical training and operating standards as FAA-employed controllers. The vast majority of federal contract controllers are retired military or FAA controllers and virtually all have FAA or military air traffic control experience. FAA controls and oversees all aspects of the federal contract tower program, including operating procedures, staffing plans, certification and medical tests of contract controllers, security and facility evaluations. Moreover, federal contract towers operate together with FAA-staffed facilities throughout the country as part of a unified national air traffic control system.

As a result of this 28-year government/industry partnership, the FAA Contract Tower Program: (1) enhances aviation safety at smaller airports that in many cases would not have a tower; (2) helps small airports with retaining and developing commercial air service and general aviation; (3) promotes economic development and creates jobs locally; and (4) consistently receives high marks for customer service from aviation users and pilots. The bottom line is that, absent this highly successful federal program, many local communities and smaller airports would not receive the significant safety benefits of air traffic control (ATC) services.

We thank you for your continued support of this important ATC safety program and look forward to working with you and your staff to ensure its future success.

Sincerely yours,



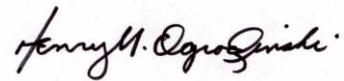
J. Spencer Dickerson
Senior Executive Vice President
American Association of Airport Executives



Roger Cohen
President
Regional Airline Association

(continued on next page)

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Henry M. Ogorodzinski
President
National Association of State Aviation Officials



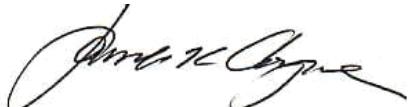
Greg Principato
President
Airports Council International - NA



Peter J. Bunce
President and CEO
General Aviation Manufacturers Association



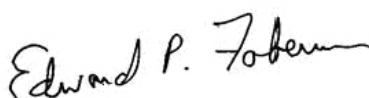
Pete Dumont
President
Air Traffic Control Association



James K. Coyne
President
National Air Transportation Association



Stephen A. Alterman
President
Cargo Airline Association



Edward P. Faberman
Executive Director
Air Carrier Association of America