

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2015

Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member David Price
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Price:

We write to request that the Committee include the attached language when drafting the FY2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill. This proposed language would ensure funding for all contract air traffic control towers that are operating at airports in service for FY2016. The Department of Transportation (DOT) has yet to provide evidence for a need to close any contract air traffic control tower, or proof that such closure would not compromise the safety of our skies. We believe it is necessary to continue to include language mandating the funding of these towers unless DOT can report to Congress why such funding is not necessary to ensure the safety of our skies.

We understand that in a time of record deficits it is necessary that all federally funded programs be looked at for potential savings. We believe that all taxpayer dollars should be spent responsibly. Repeated studies by the Department of Transportation Inspector General have shown that the contract tower program increases safety and reduces costs to the FAA and taxpayers.

As the Appropriations Committee considers federal funding for FY2016, we hope that the subcommittee will include language that would, again, reaffirm to DOT and the Federal Aviation Administration the need for fairness and safety at all airports, especially those serving smaller cities and rural communities. Contract air traffic control towers exist to direct aircraft and ensure the safety of our skies. The importance of these towers cannot be dismissed, and any reforms made to the funding levels of these towers should be made in a fair, transparent, and safe manner.

We appreciate your attention to this request and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

Tony Cardenas

Tony Cardenas
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch

Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

Mark Takano

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

Rubén Hinojosa

Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress

William R. Keating

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

Paul Gosar

Paul Gosar
Member of Congress

Denny Heck

Denny Heck
Member of Congress

Ryan Zinke

Ryan Zinke
Member of Congress

Glenn 'GT' Thompson

Glenn 'GT' Thompson
Member of Congress

Tom Emmer

Tom Emmer
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty

Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress

Don Young

Don Young
Member of Congress

Walter B. Jones

Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress

Dan Lipinski

Dan Lipinski
Member of Congress



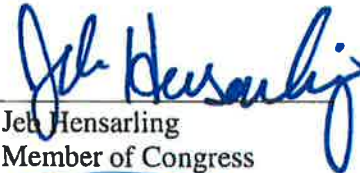
Marc Veasey
Member of Congress



Sam Farr
Member of Congress



Filimon Vela
Member of Congress



Jehu Hensarling
Member of Congress



Charles W. Boustany, Jr., MD
Member of Congress



Scott DesJarlais, M.D.
Member of Congress



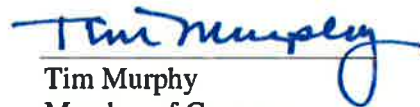
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Bob Dold
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Tim Murphy
Member of Congress



Dennis A. Ross
Member of Congress



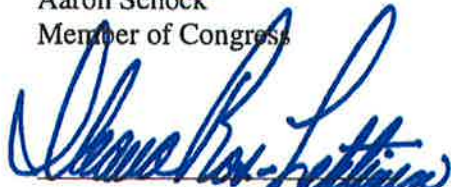
Rod Blum
Member of Congress



Aaron Schock
Member of Congress



Scott Peters
Member of Congress



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



Alan Grayson
Member of Congress



Lamar Smith
Member of Congress




Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



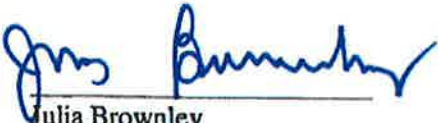
Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress



Blake Farenthold
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress



Sam Johnson
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress



Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress



Steve Pearce
Member of Congress



Steve Russell
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Bill Johnson
Member of Congress

Vicky Hartzler

Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress

Jim Costa

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

Rodney Davis

Rodney Davis
Member of Congress

Sean Duffy

Sean Duffy
Member of Congress

Kevin Brady

Kevin Brady
Member of Congress

John K. Delaney

John K. Delaney
Member of Congress

Collin C. Peterson

Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress

Robert Hurt

Robert Hurt
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

Gregg Harper

Gregg Harper
Member of Congress

Jim Himes

Jim Himes
Member of Congress

Tom Cole

Tom Cole
Member of Congress

Gwen Graham

Gwen Graham
Member of Congress

Lynn Jenkins

Lynn Jenkins
Member of Congress

Curt Clawson

Curt Clawson
Member of Congress



John Ratcliffe
Member of Congress



Martha McSally
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Chris Smith
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Patrick E. Murphy
Member of Congress

FY 2016 Appropriations Bill Language:

That such funds as necessary made available by this Act shall be provided to ensure the continued operation of all towers in the contract tower program that are located at airports still in service as of the date of enactment, and remain in operation during the duration of this Act.

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 20, 2015

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to include language ensuring full and dedicated funding for the Contract Tower Program as part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 budget for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The President's FY 2016 Budget request proposes to eliminate the dedicated funding language which was included in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235).

Full and dedicated funding for the Contract Tower Program is critical to ensuring that operations continue through FY 2016 at the 252 Federal Aviation Administration contract towers across the country. Restricting or reducing the operations of contract towers would have a substantial, negative impact on general aviation safety, the efficiency of large commercial airports, emergency medical operations, law enforcement, agriculture activities and businesses throughout the United States.

The contract tower program is one of the FAA's most cost-effective programs. Contract towers handle approximately 28 percent of the nation's air traffic control tower operations, yet they account for only 14 percent of the FAA's total tower operations budget. Additionally, the average contract tower operates at one-third the cost of a federal control tower, though it is held to the same standard of excellence.

Providing full and dedicated funding language for the Contract Tower Program is necessary to ensure FAA appropriately funds the program as it manages the budgetary constraints of the coming fiscal year. It will provide certainty to local communities and protect this important and long-standing aviation safety program from being targeted for disproportionate cuts or elimination of service at certain airports.

As Congress has done in past fiscal years, we urge you to include full and dedicated funding for the Contract Tower Program in the Fiscal Year 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Contract towers have played a central role in managing the safety and efficiency of our nation's complex airspace for over three decades, and we look forward to working with you to preserve and promote their future success.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



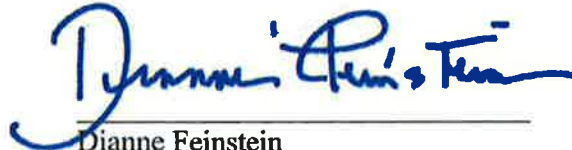
Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Johnny Isakson
United States Senator




Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Robert Menendez
United States Senator


Jeff Merkley
United States Senator


Jerry Moran
United States Senator


Bill Nelson
United States Senator


Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Tim Scott
United States Senator


Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator


Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

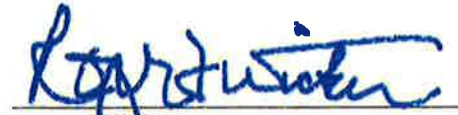

Jon Tester
United States Senator


David Vitter
United States Senator



Mark Warner
United States Senator



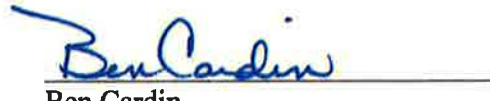
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Roger Wicker
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Ben Cardin
United States Senator