

The Honorable Bill Shuster  
Chairman  
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Ranking Member  
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio:

On behalf of business organizations, chambers of commerce, farms, agricultural and rural groups around the country, we write to ask that you oppose privatization of our nation's air traffic control system, which would remove Congressional oversight of this system and put it under the control of a board of private stakeholders.

We count on Congressional oversight to ensure that our network of 5,000 airports and communities of all sizes across the country have access to our air transportation system. These airports, and the aircraft that rely on them, are critical to supporting connectivity for small businesses and farms which make up the economic backbone of our country, they support agricultural activity and are integral to food production. They help our utility providers to repair power lines, assist farms to survey and protect their crops and allow companies to reach plants and jobsites in remote areas of the country, among many other uses. In fact, each year, the agricultural aviation industry treats 71 million acres of cropland, out of the 408 million acres of cropland in the United States.

These airports also help businesses to stay productive—businesses of all sizes, representing a variety of industries and sectors of the economy, utilize community airports and small aircraft to more efficiently travel directly from point to point, attend multiple meetings within a single day, and carry the products and tools they need. In this way, our diverse national aviation system opens up access to rural areas and small communities, where transportation would otherwise present a significant barrier to doing business.

And during times of need, general aviation and small airports can be our only lifeline to communities. In the aftermath of natural disasters, community airports become local command centers for coordinated recovery efforts and distribution centers for much-needed supplies. Local airports have been pivotal in recovery efforts following major hurricanes, tornadoes, winter storms, floods, earthquakes, etc. Most recently, Hurricane Harvey left much of the Gulf Coast near Houston inaccessible by road as a result of flood damage. General aviation was key to providing critical supplies to some of the most severely-affected areas.

But separating air traffic control from the FAA and Congressional oversight puts this resource at risk. It would put questions over taxes and fees, infrastructure investment, even routes and access, under a board of self-interested stakeholders, where the most powerful voices and the special interests they represent, call the shots.

Under a privatized system, these powerful few would undoubtedly direct resources and investments to the largest hub airports and urban areas where these investments would be most likely to benefit their bottom line, at the expense of other airports and other regions of the

country. They could also shape and influence the system in many other ways to their benefit, including by leveraging many new fees and taxes, reducing access to airports for lower cost competitors and impeding access to particular airports.

Rural communities, and the industries and services within them, are the backbone of this country. They rely on modern transportation and infrastructure, and we all support protecting that crucial access. But separating air traffic control from the FAA and the oversight of Congress would harm that crucial access. We urge you to oppose any form of air traffic control privatization.

Sincerely,

Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut, CT  
Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, CT  
National Women in Agriculture Association  
Agricultural Retailers Association  
Monterey County Farm Bureau, CA  
Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, IA  
Ames Chamber of Commerce, IA  
National Grange  
Greater Nashua Chamber of Commerce, NH  
Washington Area Chamber of Commerce, MO  
Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce, IA  
Scottsbluff/Gering United Chamber of Commerce, NE  
Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce, MS  
Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce, KS  
The Plainville Chamber of Commerce, CT  
Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce, FL  
Council of Neighborhood Associations, Inc., FL  
Centerville-Rathburn Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, IA  
Windham Region Chamber of Commerce, CT  
Beckley-Raleigh County Chamber of Commerce, WV  
Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce, VT  
Monroe County Chamber of Commerce, MS  
Chickasha Economic Development Council, OK  
Cowlitz Economic Development Council, WA  
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce, ND  
Marana Chamber of Commerce, AZ  
National Council of Agricultural Employers  
DeKalb Chamber of Commerce, GA  
Findlay Hancock County Chamber of Commerce, OH  
Alaska Farmers Market Association, AK  
League of Rural Voters  
National Farmers Union  
Fairbury Chamber of Commerce, NE  
Sedalia Area Chamber of Commerce, MO

New Town Chamber of Commerce, ND  
Pekin Area Chamber of Commerce, IL  
Louisa County Chamber of Commerce, VA  
Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce, ID  
Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce, SD  
Dumas Chamber of Commerce, AR  
Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce, NY  
Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce, ND  
New England Farmers Union  
Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce, MN  
Union County Chamber of Commerce, NC  
Monroe Chamber of Commerce, LA  
Baker Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture, MT  
Latino Chamber of Commerce of Dane County, WI  
Clallam County Economic Development Corporation, WA  
Talbot County Chamber of Commerce, MD  
Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce, CA  
Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce, CT  
Mecosta County Area Chamber of Commerce, MI  
DeKalb Chamber of Commerce, IL  
Pocatello-Chubbuck Chamber of Commerce, ID  
Rural Development Initiatives  
Texas Veterans Outdoors, TX  
Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce, ME  
Farmington Chamber of Commerce, NM  
Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce, WA  
Ashland Chamber of Commerce, WI  
Washakie Development Association, WY  
Suwannee County Chamber of Commerce, FL  
San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce, TX  
Thief River Falls Chamber of Commerce, MN  
Stuttgart Chamber of Commerce, AR  
Duchesne County Chamber of Commerce, UT  
Hubbard County Regional Economic Development Commission, MN  
Delaware-Maryland Agribusiness Association, DE  
Greeley Chamber of Commerce, CO  
Greater Cranston Chamber of Commerce, RI  
Greater Bluefield Chamber of Commerce, WV  
Jackson Chamber, TN  
Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce, SC  
Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce, AR  
Williston Area Chamber of Commerce, ND  
Ohio AgriBusiness Association, OH  
Hilo Downtown Improvement Association, HI  
Greater Hattiesburg Area Development Partnership, MS  
Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, PA

Kamiah Chamber of Commerce, ID  
Montana Agriculture Business Association, MT  
Tuskegee Area Chamber of Commerce, AL  
Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce, AL  
Scottsville-Allen County Chamber of Commerce, KY  
Agribusiness Association of Iowa, IA  
Lebanon Wilson County Chamber of Commerce, TN