

March 6, 2017

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson:

As you debate reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), I write to ask you to reject any risky plans to privatize our air traffic control system and take away Congressional oversight of this important public system.

Over the last year, proposals have recently been forwarded to put this vital infrastructure under the control of a private entity dominated by the commercial airlines. On behalf of the tens of thousands of communities around the country, we are concerned about the very real and dire ramifications of eliminating Congressional oversight-of this public air transportation infrastructure.

For tens of thousands of communities such as ours around the country, we depend on our local airport and all sectors of transportation to reach far-off markets and access critical services such as law enforcement, disaster relief, and medical care. Small aircraft and airports are utilized on a daily basis to help transport blood and organs to residents in rural communities, reunite veterans back from overseas with their families, maintain power lines, and help our companies reach customers in far-off markets, among many other priorities.

Privatization would hand over decisions about infrastructure funding, taxes and fees, consumer complaints, noise, and many other priorities, to a board of private interests dominated by the commercial airlines. These are the same airlines that have cut back flights to smaller communities by more than 20 percent in recent years, and have stated their intent to divert investment from small and mid-sized communities to large ones where the airlines are most profitable.

We are also concerned about costs and access. For example, the Canadian, privatized system, which is often held up as the system the U.S. should emulate, is more expensive than the system we have in the US by miles flown. In the U.K., that system has seen "more delays, higher fares and reduced connectivity" at London's airports since privatization. So while we all agree that modernizing our air traffic control system and investing in American infrastructure should be among our highest priorities, privatization is not the answer.

We look forward to working with you throughout this process to ensure that our air transportation system protects communities of all sizes and keeps passengers flying safely and efficiently.

Sincerely,

Elmira, NY - Mayor Daniel J. Mandell
Clarksburg, WV - Mayor Catherine A. Goings
Ocala, FL - Mayor Kent Guinn
Corning, NY - Mayor Richard P. Negri
Mitchell, SD - Mayor Jerry Toomey
Fairmont, WV - Mayor Ronald J. Straight Sr.
Edgemont, SD - Mayor Carl A. Shaw
Warwick, NY - Michael J. Newhard
Texarkana, AR - Mayor Ruth Penney Bell
Easton, MD - Mayor Robert C. Willey
Watertown, SD - Mayor Steve Thorson
Fayetteville, AR - Mayor Lioneld Jordan
Huron, SD - Mayor Paul Aylward
Texarkana, TX - Mayor Bob Bruggeman
Bloomington, IL - Mayor Tari Renner
Chillicothe, MO – Mayor Charles E. Haney
Lewisburg, WV - Mayor John Manchester
Worcester, MA - Mayor Joseph M. Petty
Elkins, WV Mayor Van T. Broughton
Wall, SD - Mayor Marty Huether
Sturgis, SD - Mayor Mark C. Carstensen
Longmont, CO - Mayor Dennis Coombs
Albert Lea, MN - Mayor Vern Rasmussen Jr.
Lake Wales, FL - Mayor Eugene Fultz
Santa Barbara, CA - Mayor Helene Schneider
Riverside, CA - Mayor William Bailey
McCall, ID - Mayor Jackie J. Aymon
Sioux Falls, SD - Mayor Mike Huether
Concord, NC - Mayor Scott Padgett
Prospect Heights, IL - Mayor Nicholas Helmer
Mountain Home, ID - Mayor Rich Sykes
Lewiston, ID - Mayor Jim Kleeburg
Florence, SC - Mayor Stephen J. Wukela
Fernley, NV - Mayor Roy G. Edgington Jr.
Huntington, WV - Mayor Steve Williams
Morristown, NJ - Mayor Timothy Dougherty
Macomb, IL - Mayor Michael J. Inman
Kamiah, ID - Mayor Dale Schneider
Mesquite, NV - Mayor Allan Litman
Mount Pleasant, SC - Mayor Linda Page
Newport, OR - Mayor Sandy Roumagoux
Jacksonville, IL – Mayor Andy Ezard
Broomfield, CO - Mayor Randy Ahrens
Petaluma, CA - Mayor David Glass

DeLand, FL - Mayor Robert F. Apgar
Jackson, TN - Mayor Jerry Gist
Gainesville, FL - Mayor Lauren Poe
Annapolis, MD - Mayor Mike Pantelides
Fernandina Beach, FL - Mayor John A. Miller
Naples, FL - Mayor Bill Barnett
Fargo, ND - Mayor Tim Mahoney
Sedalia, MO - Mayor Stephen Galliher
Wenatchee, WA - Mayor Frank Kuntz
Coeur d'Alene, ID - Mayor Steve Widmyer
Cumberland, MD - Mayor Brian Grim
Keene, NH - Mayor Kendall Lane
Zanesville, OH - Mayor Jeff Tilton
Youngstown, OH - Mayor John McNally IV
Henderson, NV - Mayor Andy Hafen
Big Rapids, MI - Mayor Mark Warba
Pinedale, WY - Mayor Bob Jones
Pekin, IL - Mayor John McCabe
Hermiston, OR - Dr. Dave Drotzmann, Mayor
Wausau, WI - Mayor Robert Mielke
Danbury, CT - Mayor Mark D. Boughton
New London, CT - Mayor Michael Passero
Idaho Falls, ID - Mayor Rebecca L. Noah Casper
Valdez, AK - Mayor Ruth E. Knight
Brigham City, UT - Mayor Tyler Vincent
Salisbury, MD - Mayor Jacob R. Day
Ely, MN - Mayor Chuck Novak
Winona, MN - Mayor Mark Peterson
New Ulm, MN - Mayor Robert J. Beussman
Wasilla, AK - Mayor Bert Cottle
Barre, VT - Mayor Thom Lauzon
Yerington, NV - Mayor George Dini
Taos, NM - Mayor Daniel Barrone
Arlington, WA - Mayor Barbara Tolbert
Boulder, CO - Mayor Suzanne Jones
Pullman, WA - Mayor Glenn A. Johnson, Ph.D.
Abilene, TX - Mayor Norm Archibald
Monroe, NC - Mayor Bobby Kilgore
Moscow, ID - Mayor Bill Lambert
Georgetown, DE - Mayor William E. West
Kenai, AK - Mayor Brian G. Gabriel, Sr.
Riverton, WY - Mayor John 'Lars' Baker
Grant, NE - Mayor Michael Wyatt
Findlay, OH - Mayor Lydia Mihalik
Martinsburg, WV - Mayor George Karos
Bingen, WA - Mayor Betty J. Barnes

Zephyrhills, FL Mayor Gene Whitfield
Terre Haute, IN - Mayor Duke Bennett
Carrollton, GA - Mayor Walt Hollingsworth
Altus, OK - Mayor Jack Smiley
Wheeling, WV - Mayor Glenn F. Elliott, Jr.
Salinas, CA - Mayor Joe Gunter
Hays, KS - Mayor Shaun Musil
Augusta, ME - Mayor David Rollins
Pendleton, OR - Mayor Phillip W. Houk
Hot Springs, AR - Mayor Ruth Carney
Fallon, NV - Mayor Ken Tedford Jr.
Latrobe, PA - Mayor Rosie Wolford
Le Mars, IA - Mayor Dick Kirchoff
Hutchinson, KS - Mayor Jon Daveline
Council Bluffs, IA - Mayor Matt Walsh
Salina, KS - Mayor Kaye J. Crawford
Henderson, KY - Mayor Steve Austin
Kaua'i County, HI - Mayor Bernard Carvalho
Natchitoches, LA - Mayor Lee Posey
Jonesville, VA - Mayor Jim Ewing
Cottonwood, AZ - Mayor Tim Elinski
Tuscaloosa, AL - Mayor Walt Maddox
Tucson, AZ - Mayor Jonathan Rothschild
Clarksdale, MS - Mayor Bill Lockett
Baker, MT - Mayor JoDee Pratt
Great Falls, MT - Mayor Bob Kelly
Middletown, RI – Town Council President Robert Sylvia
Wichita, KS – Mayor Jeff Longwell