Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 14, 2013

Michael Huerta
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta,

We are deeply troubled by your public statements and proposed actions regarding the effect of sequestration on local airports. These airports have long played a vital role in economies across the country. Local airports serve as a gateway to distant markets for local businesses, as a primary link between rural communities and the larger aviation network, and as a critical backup to some of our nation's busiest airports.

Over the past two weeks, you and Secretary LaHood have decried the cuts imposed by the sequester as "crippling" and fatal for the Federal Aviation Administration. Your office has released a list of contract towers that you claim will be abandoned to meet the $628 million in cuts from the sequester. These cuts would reduce funding for nearly 200 contract control towers out of the 250 towers in the program. Combined, these airports handle 28% of tower operations nationwide, playing a vital role in our nation's transportation infrastructure. Put simply, these cuts are drastic, unnecessary, and should be reevaluated.

We expect a responsible executive in your position to propose rational solutions to minimize the effect of these cuts on the aviation infrastructure and the traveling public. In fact, Congress requested such a plan six months ago. But your department has failed to deliver such plans, an unacceptable failure to respond to modest belt-tightening that so many American families have done over the last four years.

As Representative Sam Graves noted during your testimony before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation last week, these modest reductions would return FAA funding to the same level it had in FY2008. We find it difficult to believe the FAA cannot now manage these spending reductions since it seemed to perform just fine in 2008. This is particularly disappointing considering your organization spends $500 million on consultants and $200 million on travel each year, yet it apparently cannot find $30 million a month to offset the sequester reductions.

We therefore request you provide:

- a detailed assessment of the effects the closure of 189 contract towers would have on our aviation infrastructure's structural integrity
- a detailed list of other alternatives that were considered to mitigate the sequester's effect on the Contract Tower Program
- a detailed list of all planned FY2013 thru FY2015 conventions, conferences, and trips that were organized, paid for, or attended by FAA staff and their cost to taxpayers

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Please provide this information no later than 5:00 p.m. EDT on March 29, 2013. Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,

Tom Cotton
Member of Congress

John Boozman
United States Senator

James Risch
United States Senator

Martha Roby
Member of Congress

Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress

Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress

Rich Nugent
Member of Congress

Walter Jones
Member of Congress

Richard Hanna
Member of Congress

David McKinley
Member of Congress

F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Member of Congress

Rick Crawford
Member of Congress

Paul C. Broun, M.D.
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Steve Pearce
Member of Congress

Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress

Sam Graves
Member of Congress

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Jeff Duncan
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Mike Simpson
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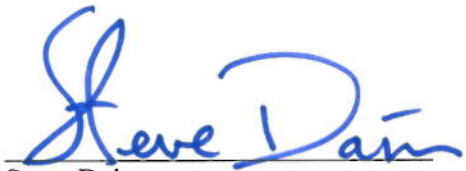
Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress



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Lou Barletta
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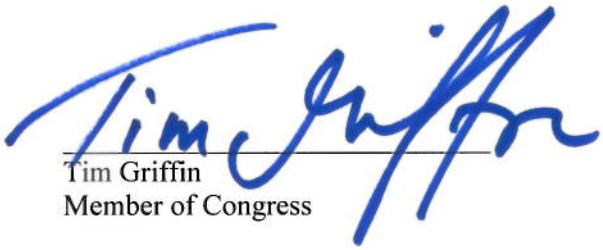
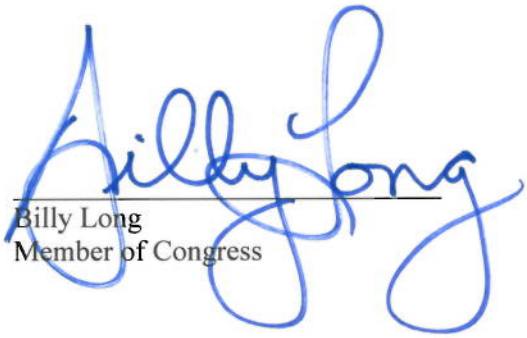
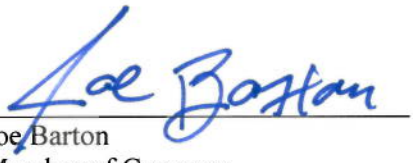
Member of Congress



Tim Griffin
Member of Congress



Billy Long
Member of Congress



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