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October 16, 2019

Chairman Craig Arcur
Chair, City of Santa Barbara Airport Commission
601 Firestone Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93117

TRANSMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL TO:
AIRPORT@SANTABARBARACA.GOV

Re: Airport Controlled Transient Parking at Santa Barbara Municipal Airport

Dear Mr. Arcur and members of the commission:

I write to you on behalf of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the world's largest aviation organization, representing the general aviation (GA) interests of over 36,000 members in California. AOPA asks that you consider our input regarding the City of Santa Barbara Airport Commission's agenda item number seven regarding the adoption of a plan presented by the Santa Barbara Municipal Airport (SBA) Airport Director.

AOPA has recently identified a common issue that plagues airports nationwide including Santa Barbara. While fixed based operators (FBOs) are integral to effective general aviation (GA) operations, they often maintain the only authorized parking for transient GA aircraft. In effect, they hold a monopoly on GA parking and can charge accordingly. In some cases, this has led to unreasonable fees that are often obfuscated from the customer until they are charged. As such, AOPA is encouraging airports nationwide to establish and clearly label transient GA parking. In so doing airports can establish an avenue to attract transient aircraft not requiring additional services while allowing the FBO to retain the business of those that do. Additionally, AOPA and five other aviation organization have recently published "know before you go" guidelines which encourage FBOs to make their fees available online, allowing pilots to make informed decisions prior to flight.

Henry Thompson, SBA Airport Director, states in his letter to the Commission, "consistent with AOPA encouragement, [my] staff believes concerns for access for transient general aviation aircraft can be accommodated without unnecessary risk and exposure to the airport, and that this business legitimately belongs to the FBO's who are better positioned to manage it and mitigate these associated risks." I want to take a moment to clarify that AOPA does not believe this authority should be left in control of commercial FBOs. We encourage the City of Santa Barbara to address the concerns of its pilot community who have voiced several legitimate options for sponsor controlled transient parking areas at SBA.

AOPA has a strong interest in supporting the GA community's right to access publicly funded airports which must include options for sponsor controlled transient parking when space is available. Providing transient parking is a great way to attract GA to SBA and provide aviators with options

AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

once they arrive. We encourage the City to adopt a plan that would allot space separate from the commercial FBOs for transient GA parking.

Lastly, any proposed changes at a public airport must incorporate feedback from the flying public. As the proposed plan from the Airport Director has not been publicly released, AOPA and its members are unable to provide appropriate comments prior to the October 16th meeting. AOPA looks forward to being able to review the proposed plan and provide comments as is standard with any proposed changes. We respectfully request that the proposed plan include sponsor controlled transient GA parking or that the commission at least defer the adoption of the plan until transient GA parking can be more thoroughly evaluated.

Thank you in advance for considering the GA community as you move forward with any plans for transient aircraft parking areas at SBA. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at 301-695-2228 or Melissa.McCaffrey@aopa.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa McCaffrey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melissa McCaffrey
Western Pacific Regional Manager, AOPA