



## AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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October 17, 2007

Mr. Michael J. Geiger  
Airport Director  
Republic Airport  
7150 Republic Airport  
Room 216  
East Farmingdale, NY 11735-3930

Dear Mr. Geiger:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of more than 413,000 pilots nationwide, including nearly 15,000 in New York State – and I am writing to express our concerns about recent proposals for additional security requirements at Republic Airport. We have recently learned that the Airport, as part of its security program, may require all pilots and aircraft owners based at the airport to undergo three separate background checks, including one for criminal history. We also understand that this requirement has caused considerable unease both within the pilot community and amongst businesses located on the airport. They are naturally concerned that such requirements can only serve to limit access to the airport, and, particularly in the case of potential student pilots, deter them from seeking instruction.

AOPA recognizes that Republic has a legitimate need to institute reasonable security measures, and as a Part 139 certificated airport, is required to develop a security plan. Earlier this year, AOPA staff participated in discussions with Republic management over vehicle access to the airport ramp and hangar areas. While we were concerned at the time that the proposed regulations exceeded the actual need for security, we were satisfied that, working with the pilot community, we were able to ensure that the rules adopted by the airport would continue to provide that access for pilots and aircraft owners.

At the same time, it seems that the measures being proposed now are far more appropriate to an air carrier airport, rather than one devoted to general aviation activity. While we can appreciate the airport's interest in restricting vehicular access, and even for checking the identity of pilots, it is difficult to see any need to go through such an elaborate and invasive background check process. It should be sufficient to establish the identity of pilots and aircraft owners, and their need for access to the airport.

As you know, every pilot is already required by federal regulation to have in their possession and available for inspection both their FAA issued pilot's certificate and a government-issued photo identification. In most cases, that additional ID is a driver's license, which can be easily used to establish an individual's driving privileges. Use of these government-issued documents should alleviate the need for the airport to engage in a series of costly and time-consuming background checks.

Mr. Michael J. Geiger

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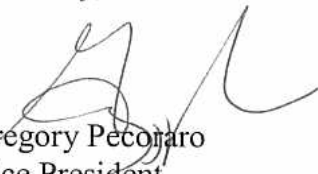
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Beyond that, consideration should be given to easing the access of visitors and potential students to flight schools. As you know there are already many obstacles in the way of individuals interested in learning to fly – access to a flight instructor should not be amongst them. Finally, if badges are to be required, we question the need for a biennial renewal. Federal authorities responsible for aviation security regularly vet all pilots, obviating the need for a general aviation airport to institute such practices.

Before the airport management begins to implement these new security measures beyond the employee population, we strongly encourage you to rethink the rationale and need for these actions, reconsider the current requirements, and to choose a course that requires less invasion of privacy and fewer restrictions. As always, the pilot and aircraft owner community is ready to work with you to develop reasonable standards that meet the legitimate security needs of the airport, while preserving easy access to general aviation.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our comments. Should you have any questions or concerns, or should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or AOPA Northeast Regional Representative, Craig Dotlo at 914-631-4051.

Sincerely,



Gregory Pecoraro  
Vice President  
Regional Affairs

cc: Craig Dotlo, AOPA NE Regional Representative