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April 23, 2008

The Honorable Michael J. Madigan  
Speaker  
Illinois House of Representatives  
300 State House  
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of 415,000 pilots nationwide – including more than 13,500 in Illinois. We are writing to express our support for Senate Bill 2501. This legislation would amend the Eminent Domain Act for the specific purpose of granting quick-take eminent domain powers for a period of one year to the Village of Lake in the Hills for the Lake in the Hills Airport runway.

With 129 based aircraft and 34,000 reported operations annually, Lake in the Hills Airport is an important part of the air transportation system for Illinois and the nation. The airport is included in the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). This designation itself is recognition of the importance of the airport, makes the airport eligible for federal grants for a variety of improvements, and creates certain obligations for the airport sponsor.

In fact, one of the obligations the airport sponsor assumed when it accepted federal grants is to take appropriate actions regarding safe and adequate facilities at the airport. Right now, the Village of Lake in the Hills, as the airport sponsor, is unable to move forward with its efforts to fulfill this obligation until it works to acquire land needed to comply with current FAA safety standards. The Village's plan is to widen the airport's single runway, move a taxiway and parking apron. In addition, they also must relocate and lower a nearby road, which is too close to the end of the runway. Construction has been scheduled for the summer, but the Village has run into a significant obstacle in acquiring this last parcel of land.

Creating and maintaining a safe operating environment at an airport is one of a sponsor's most important obligations. On behalf of the aviation community, we encourage the Illinois General Assembly to enact SB 2501 and grant these temporary powers to the Village of Lake in the Hills.

We appreciate your support for general aviation, and hope that you will give this legislation your favorable consideration. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Joey Colleran  
Manager  
State Legislative Affairs