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June 7, 2011

Theresa M. Cook, AAE
Executive Director
Coos County Airport District
P.O. Box F
North Bend, OR 97459

Dear Ms. Cook,

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of over 400,000 members, more than two-thirds of the nation's pilots, including nearly 6,400 in the State of Oregon. AOPA is committed to ensuring the future viability, safety and economic development of general aviation airports and their facilities as a vital part of a state and national transportation system. Airport development and operation must be conducted in a fair and reasonable manner without economic hardships being imposed on users of the airport.

We are writing regarding the new Airport Use and Overnight Fee structure recently put in place at Southwest Oregon Regional Airport. We have been contacted by a number of members of the Association who have expressed concern regarding the level of these new fees.

While the airport clearly has the authority to implement a rate and fee structure that will make the airport as self-sufficient as possible under the current airport conditions as provided under Federal Aviation Administration grant assurances, such fees must be fair and reasonable without any unjust discrimination. Additionally, as I am certain you are aware, airports may not implement fee structures simply to "bank" funds past what would be ordinarily necessary to accommodate planned airport development, operations or the required local Airport Improvement Program (AIP) match.

In reviewing the fee structure as published on the airport's web site and dated May 24, 2011, we were unable to establish a consistency between rate classes. As such, we are asking that your office provide us with the methodology used to 1) define the criteria used to establish each of the Rate classes (Rate I through Rate VII) and select aircraft for each class and 2) the methodology used to establish the monetary amounts for each of the Rate Classes (Rate I through VII).

We would appreciate receiving your response at the earliest time so that we can further evaluate the fees being charged on behalf of our member interests in operating at Southwest Oregon Regional Airport and determine any further actions necessary on their behalf.

Sincerely,

Bill Dunn
Vice President, Airport Advocacy

CC: Mr. Mike Lehman
Mr. Joe Benetti
Ms. Helen Brunell Mineau
Mr. John Briggs
Mr. Jon Barton