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June 21, 2011

The Honorable Paul Opsommer
Chairman, Transportation Committee
Michigan House of Representatives
N-1197 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Chairman Opsommer:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), a not-for-profit membership organization, represents the general aviation interests of over 400,000 members nationwide – including over 12,000 in Michigan. Since 1939, AOPA has been committed to ensuring the safety, future viability, and development of general aviation airports and their facilities as a part of our national transportation system. We write to express our support for Michigan House Bill 4025 and the long-term viability of the Michigan's 228 public use airports.

Michigan House Bill 4025 would dedicate a portion of the sales tax levied on aviation gasoline and jet fuel to the State Aviation Fund for future investment in the airport system. The current tax structure deposits aviation-derived sales tax revenue into the general fund for purposes unrelated to aviation, leaving aviation infrastructure investment accounts underfunded and the maintenance of basic infrastructure in jeopardy. To better support the state's aviation system, House Bill 4025 will provide for a sufficient Aviation Fund that in turn can be used not only to support increased state-sponsored infrastructure investment, but also can be leveraged to secure additional Federal Aviation Administration Airport Improvement Program grants.

Michigan's aviation fuel tax rates are among the highest in the nation, yet vital investment in the aviation system continues to decline. As one of only 15 states that impose a sales tax on aviation gasoline, Michigan should be well positioned to support investment in its airports. House Bill 4025 would correct this situation by guaranteeing that aviation-derived tax revenue is reinvested in the maintenance and improvement of existing airport infrastructure. Adoption of House Bill 4025 will secure a reliable, user-funded means of financing airport infrastructure investment. It will ensure the continued safety and efficiency of the State's aviation system, as well as the continued health of the \$4 billion annual economic impact of general aviation in Michigan.

Thank you for your consideration of the important issue. We urge you to support House Bill 4025 and protect the state's existing aviation investment by guaranteeing its future financial viability. Should you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, or our Great Lakes Regional Representative Bill Blake at (309) 981-3048.

Very truly yours,


Gregory Pecoraro
Vice President, Airports and State Advocacy

cc: House of Representatives Transportation Committee
Speaker of the House James Bolger
Representative Dave Agema