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December 15, 2011

Honorable Mark Mallory
Mayor of Cincinnati
801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202-1979

Dear Mayor Mallory:

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 13,000 in the State of Ohio. AOPA is committed to ensuring the future viability, safety and economic development of general aviation facilities, without unjust restrictions or discrimination, as a vital part of a state and national transportation system.

Over the past few weeks, we have seen a growing number of news reports indicating that the City of Cincinnati is seriously considering closing the Blue Ash Airport (ISZ) in 2012. These revelations are contrary to the long understandings of the aviation community as well as commitments conveyed by city staff including the City Manager's office and Lunken Airport Manager Fred Anderton. I am sure you recall that the former president of AOPA and I met with you on this very subject in May of 2006. In fact, over the course of the past 4 years, we have had a number of meetings with city staff in Cincinnati and Blue Ash on this matter. I met personally with Mr. Anderton in March of this year receiving assurances that the City of Cincinnati was committed to seeing the reconfiguration of Blue Ash Airport to completion.

The current direction of the city seems to plan the use of sale proceeds of that part of ISZ sold to the City of Blue Ash for a street car project within Cincinnati. As I know your administration is aware, use of airport revenue for non-aviation related purposes would violate Federal law. We are also aware that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reminded the city of this fact during both on-site meetings and a follow-up letter of December 13, 2010 from the FAA.

AOPA and the aviation community are extremely disappointed by this apparent change in city policy and commitment to Blue Ash Airport's continued operations. Be assured that we are strongly opposed to the closure of ISZ. According to a 2006 Economic Impact Report conducted by Wilbur Smith, ISZ provides over \$6.9 million in economic impact to the area annually.

AOPA is committed to working with the FAA and aviation industry to ensure the future viability and operation of Blue Ash Airport. We ask that you and staff reconsider the direction being undertaken regarding the airport. The Association will take any and all action we deem necessary to protect this important general aviation airport as part of a state and national transportation.

Respectfully,

Bill Dunn
Vice President
Airport Advocacy