



June 15th, 2017
Ohio Senate Finance Committee
Senator Scott Oelslager, Chairman
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

RE : Ohio Airport Protection Act / Tall Structures

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is the world's largest aviation organization, representing 350,000 pilots, aircraft owners, and aviation enthusiasts, of which over 9,200 reside in the State of Ohio. On behalf of our membership, AOPA is committed to ensuring the safety, future viability, and development of general aviation as an integral part of a national transportation system.

The financial impact of airports can be measured in various ways, all leading to the fact that airports are imperative to the overall economic health and growth of a state, region, and local community. Airports in Ohio are, if anything, considered landmarks interwoven into the communities they represent. Governor James A. Rhodes put forth a vision of economic growth based on the location and access to airports that is still being put to work this very day.

Ohio, along with the rest of the nation is in an ever changing landscape of technology and societal change. With that change comes the need for different infrastructure and technology. Cell phones, data links, weather monitoring, and wind energy all require a certain type of infrastructure, tall towers. As more of these technologies are put into service, the world becomes a smaller place, not only via communication, but geographically.

These tall structures range from cell/data towers, residential or commercial construction, and windmills are impacting not only real estate, but airports and the navigable airspace near, around, and above them. Pilots have the ability to navigate poor weather conditions utilizing their aircraft instruments and FAA designated approaches into airports (large and small). These approaches are considered protected zones, along with visual referenced zones near and around the airport vicinity used in visual flight rules during takeoff and landing. In these phases of flight, the aircraft is relatively low to the ground and maneuvering for transition to landing or departure. Every airport is different in means of approaches, visual references, and altitudes. The FAA designates these areas as "FAR Part 77 obstruction clear areas", and are to be free from tall structures (or natural growth) that could impact safety of flight.

AOPA's primary concern is for the safety of the users of that airspace. There are multiple factors at play when determining the proper location for a tall structure, and Ohio should allow airports to be considered a heavily weighted factor. Safety should not be marginalized over a prospective company's profit for constructing a tall structure.



Ohio DOT Aviation processes nearly 3,000 permits for tall structures on an annual basis. This cost to taxpayers registers at over \$500,000 dollars per annum that could be used for airport improvements across the state. Currently, there is no fee structure paid by the permit applicants in Ohio to finance the permitting process. By updating the language in the Ohio Airport Act, fees may be instituted to bear the cost of the permitting process. Other language introduced that should be ratified includes provisions to strengthen the permitting process and keep Ohio's airports and airspace safe for current and future users.

AOPA supports the proposed changes to the Ohio Airports Act, which have been stripped from the Senate version of HB 49. I kindly urge the committee to reinstate the language to enhance the safety for Ohio's airports and airspace system.

Thank you for your time and consideration, if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Kyle Lewis

Regional Manager for Government Affairs and Airport Advocacy / Great Lakes Region
AOPA

CC:

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