

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 14, 2018

Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member David Price  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Price:

We write to thank the Committee for its past support of the contract air traffic control program and again request that the Committee include language to fully fund the Contract Tower Program in the FY2019 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill. The attached language would ensure funding for all contract air traffic control towers that are operating at airports in service for FY2019.

The Contract Tower Program has been in place for over 30 years and exemplifies how the private sector and federal government can partner together to improve air traffic safety in a proven, cost-effective manner for the FAA and American taxpayers. Currently, 254 communities in 46 states benefit from the enhanced safety and improved air traffic control (ATC) services provided by FAA contract towers. These towers reinforce a unified national ATC system and play a vital role in connecting smaller airports and rural America with the national air transportation system.

Not only do these contract towers provide an important safety service, but they do so in a cost-effective fashion, as validated in numerous reports by the Department of Transportation (DOT) Office of Inspector General. FAA contract towers handle approximately 28 percent of all U.S. air traffic control tower operations, but account for just 14 percent of the FAA's overall budget allotted to tower operations. Additionally, the Contract Tower Program arguably provides the FAA and American taxpayers annual savings of approximately \$198 million (approximately \$1.98 billion over the past 10 years). Contract towers also play an important role in disaster and emergency relief efforts, as well as for military operations. Many airports that participate in the Federal Contract Tower Program are located near or adjacent to military bases and serve as significant readiness or training facilities for military units. Additionally, it is important to note that 70 percent of contract tower controllers are veterans.

As the DOT has yet to provide evidence for a need to close any contract air traffic control tower, or proof that such closure would not compromise the safety of our skies, we believe it is necessary and important to continue to include language mandating the funding of these towers, which are so important to the communities we serve. We understand that in a time of record

deficits, it is necessary that all federally funded programs be examined for potential savings. However, repeated studies by DOT's Inspector General have shown that the contract tower program increases safety and reduces costs to the FAA and taxpayers.

As the Appropriations Committee once again considers federal funding, we hope that the subcommittee will include language that would reaffirm the need for fairness and safety at all airports, especially those serving smaller cities and rural communities. Contract air traffic control towers exist to direct aircraft, ensure the safety of our skies, and provide a safe space for military operations across our country. The importance of these towers cannot be dismissed, and any reforms made to the funding levels of these towers should be made in a fair, transparent, and safe manner.

FY 2019 Appropriations Bill Language:

*That such funds as necessary made available by this Act shall be provided to ensure the continued operation of all towers in the contract tower program that are located at airports in service during Fiscal Year 2019, and remain in operation during the duration of this Act.*

We appreciate your attention to this request and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



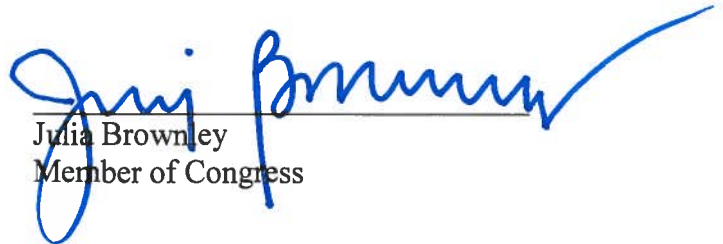
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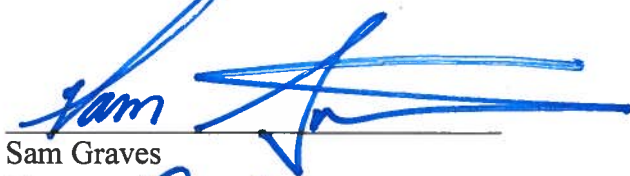
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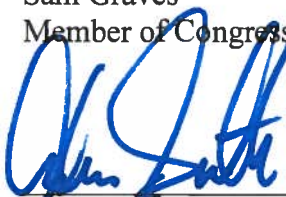
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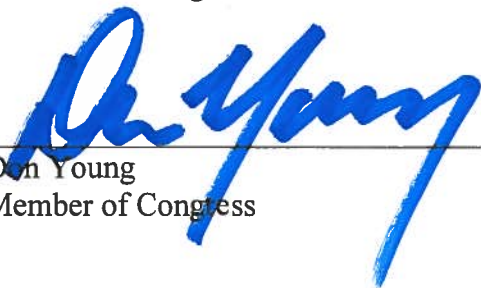
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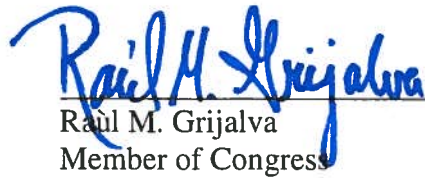
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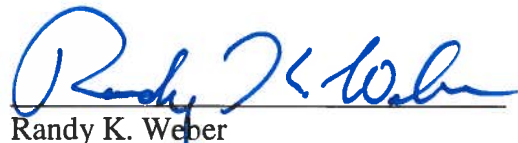
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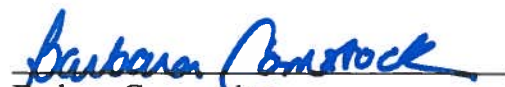
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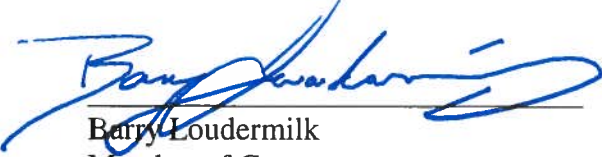




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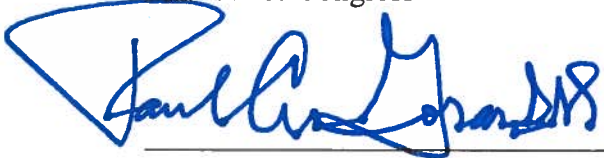
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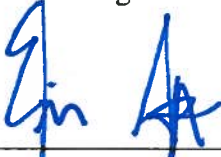
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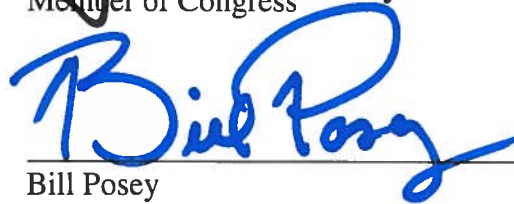
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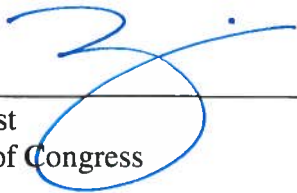
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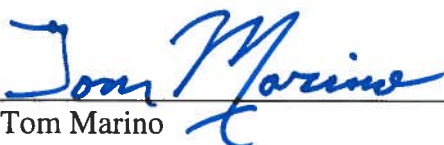
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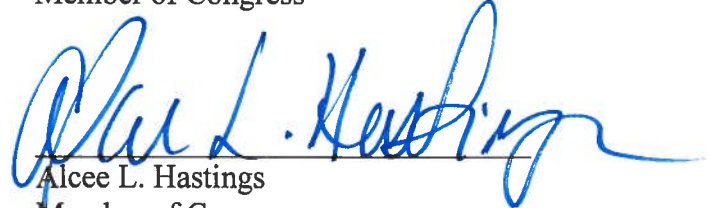
  
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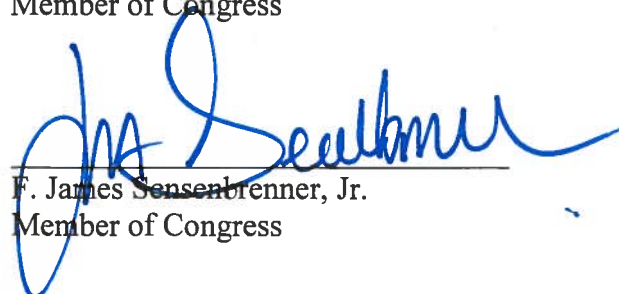
  
Alcee L. Hastings  
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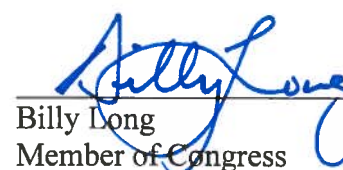
  
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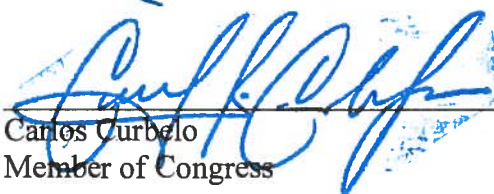
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Robin L. Kelly  
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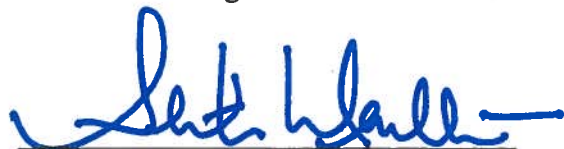
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Ed Perlmutter  
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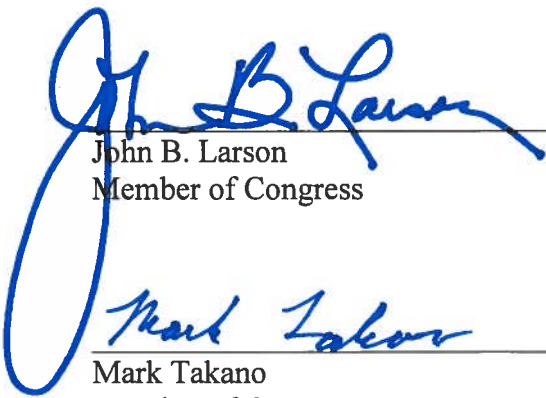
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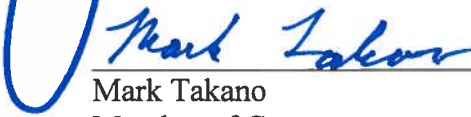




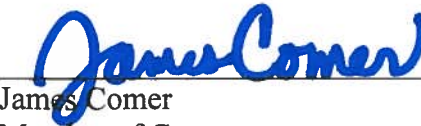
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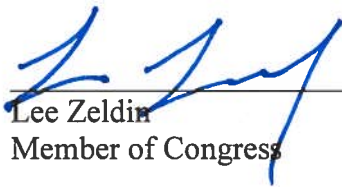
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Mark Takano  
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James Comer  
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Lee Zeldin  
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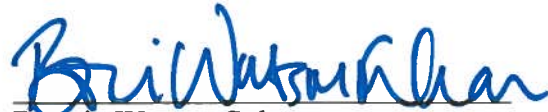
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Raúl Labrador  
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Jennifer Gonzalez-Colon  
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Bonnie Watson Coleman  
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Juan Vargas  
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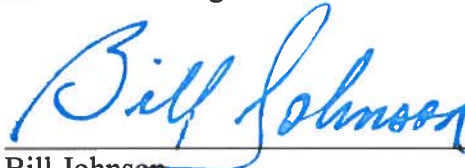
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Andy Biggs  
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John K. Delaney  
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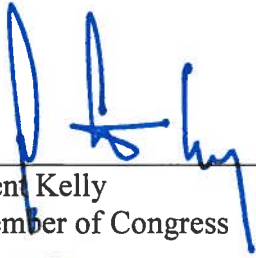


Niki Tsongas  
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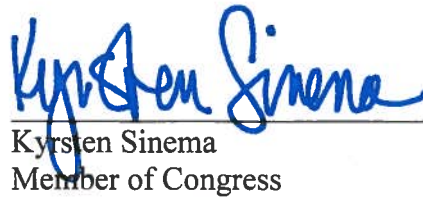
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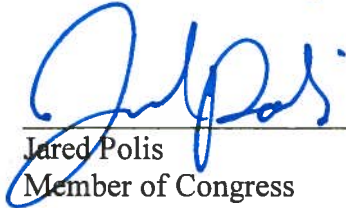
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Trent Kelly  
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Jared Polis  
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Vicente Gonzalez  
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Francis Rooney  
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Glenn 'GT' Thompson  
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Tom O'Halleran  
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Steve Russell  
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Joyce Beatty  
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Ann McLane Kuster  
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Salud O. Carbajal  
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Michelle Lujan Grisham  
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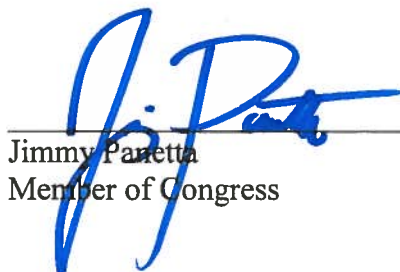
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Scott Tipton  
Member of Congress



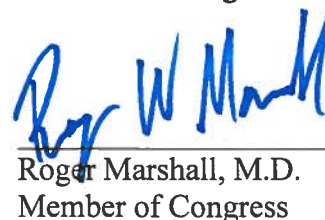
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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



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Roger Marshall, M.D.  
Member of Congress



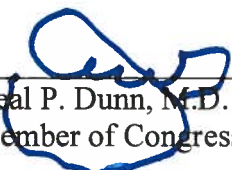
Ruben J. Kihuen  
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Mike Johnson  
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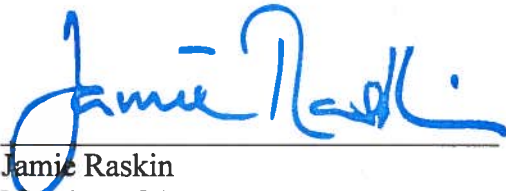
Ralph Abraham, MD  
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Charlie Crist  
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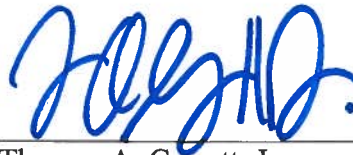
Filemon Vela  
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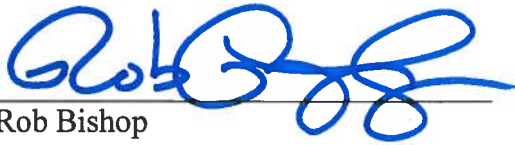
Dennis A. Ross  
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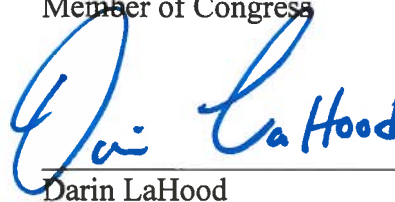
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