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August 14, 2020

The Honorable Cecilia Lorena Gonzalez
Chair, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
Capitol Office, Room 2114
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0080

Dear Assembly Member Gonzalez and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment regarding SB 1120, relating to subdivisions and tentative maps and SB 902, relating to planning, zoning, housing development and density. I write on behalf of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the world's largest aviation organization, representing the general aviation interests of over 36,000 members in California, operating from over 200 general aviation airports across the State. General aviation encompasses all civilian flying except scheduled passenger airline service and military aviation. AOPA opposes SB 902 and SB 1120, legislation that would remove local authority over land use and development decisions which would negatively affect the future viability of airports across the State.

California's aviation infrastructure is among our states most important public resource and serves our communities in several vital ways. Community airports are economic magnets that generate revenue, provide critical services and create jobs. In times of disaster, airports provide an essential lifeline, often acting as staging points for relief and rescue operations and may be the only means of transporting people and goods.

If SB 902 or SB 1120 becomes law, it would transform housing policies in the State and transfer decision making from cities and counties to far removed planners in Sacramento. Currently, planning commissions of municipal governments have the decision making authority to approve or reject development plans. SB 902 and SB 1120 could leave cities and counties forced to find open spaces areas for development, which will inevitably include community airports areas. In many urban and suburban areas (such as Carlsbad, Santa Monica, Oxnard, Santa Maria, Palo Alto, Hayward, San Rafael, and Petaluma) airports are surrounded by low-density single family neighborhoods.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has long held that incompatible land use including any residential development is a threat to the continued viability of airports. Additionally, when an airport sponsor accepts federal airport development funding from the FAA, they enter a contractual obligation to protect the airport from incompatible land use. SB 902 and SB 1120 would create a conflict between federal requirements imposed on the airport sponsor and state residential development law.

AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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An increased encroachment by residential properties near airports, mixed with localities having no say over their airports' fate, is truly a threat and creates a serious ripple in the establish and important airport system California has today. We urge you reject passage of SB 902 and SB 1120, ensuring that California general aviation airports are not threatened by housing development near airports, or even closed in favor of housing development. Not supporting SB 902 and SB 1120 will go a long way in preserving and protecting the future of the States airport infrastructure and general aviation community.

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact me directly at 301-695-2228 or Melissa.McCaffrey@aopa.org

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa McCaffrey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melissa McCaffrey
Western Pacific Government Affairs
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association