

March 17, 2021

The Honorable Nydia Velazquez
Chair
Committee on Small Business
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Blaine Luetkemeyer
Ranking Member
Committee on Small Business
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ben Cardin
Chair
Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rand Paul
Ranking Member
Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Cardin, Ranking Member Paul, Chair Velazquez and Ranking Member Luetkemeyer:

As the leaders of our country's general aviation community, we are writing today to solicit your support in providing additional guidance to the Small Business Administration regarding the eligibility of our nation's civilian air shows for COVID relief funding that Congress made available through the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant program.

Because the 300+ events held each year in the United States provide the larger general aviation community with an opportunity to familiarize the public with general aviation and local airports while also promoting careers in aviation and aerospace, the American air show business provides a much needed and deeply appreciated service to the larger aviation and aerospace communities. Each year, more than 10 million Americans attend these events to be entertained, inspired and educated.

Comprised of hundreds of small businesses, the air show industry is a small, but important tool for our industry to provide outreach to those who might otherwise have no exposure or understanding of the value and importance of aviation in their communities. Although these events have a combined economic impact of nearly \$900 million in the cities and towns where they are held and directly and indirectly employ between 20,000 and 25,000 Americans, their value to the general aviation community as a public outreach tool is incalculable.

The air show community has been significantly impacted by the COVID pandemic and our country's decision to cancel or postpone large scale public events during the last twelve months. Of the more than 300 shows scheduled to be held in the United States last year, all but eleven were cancelled. This has put the future of the air show business at risk.

The \$16.25 billion appropriated to the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) program will provide the lifeline the American air show community needs to survive these difficult times. Created by Congress for the specific purpose of offering financial relief to performative events that were forced to close down in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the SVOG program recognizes the disproportionate impact that the pandemic has had on a wide variety of live venue operators.

But even within the narrow category of performance events, air shows are unique. They meet both the letter and intent of the legislation and its various requirements and restrictions, but -- despite their popularity with millions of Americans -- they are not as familiar to most people as motion picture theaters, museums and concert venues.

On behalf of the thousands of people who work in the air show business and the millions of people who attend these events every year, we request that the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship and the House Committee on Small Business provide additional guidance and direction to the Small Business Administration to insure that it recognizes air shows as one of the types of shuttered venue events that Congress intended to support when it passed legislation creating the Shuttered Venue Operators Grants program.

Thank you for your support on this vitally important issue to the aviation and aerospace communities.

Sincerely,



Mark Baker
President
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association



Ed Bolen
President & CEO
National Business Aviation Association



Pete Bunce
President & CEO
General Aviation Manufacturers Association



Tim Obitts
President & CEO
National Air Transportation Association



Jack Pelton
CEO & Chairman of the Board
Experimental Aircraft Association



James Viola
President & CEO
Helicopter Association International