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January 28th, 2024
Senator Veronica Klinefelt
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TRANSMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL TO: SenVKlinefelt@senate.michigan.gov

RE: Draft 1 / Amend 1945 PA 327, Registration Fees

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the world's largest aviation organization, is a strong advocate for general aviation, with a priority being the economic accessibility to our members. AOPA would like to submit the following comments regarding the draft legislation to raise aircraft registration fees in Michigan.

AOPA supports reasonable fees, paid by pilots and aircraft owners when using the aeronautical system. These fees/taxes include fuel taxes, sales or excise, registration fees which vary from state to state, and certain imposed landing fees when constructed on a transparent and justifiable basis. The fees mentioned provide for infrastructure and programs related to the aeronautical system nationally, and state to state.

It is no secret that registration fees in Michigan have not been adjusted since 1948, which currently sits at \$.01 per pound. The proposal of \$.10 per pound would cause harm to the aviation system in Michigan. The increase would incentivize aircraft owners to register aircraft out of state, in a more friendly environment for owners. There is also no mechanism in the draft legislation to ensure that revenues generated from these fees are mandated back to aeronautical expenditures in the state. Failure to do so would be gross neglect of the aviation infrastructure in Michigan.

With this proposed increase, a Cessna 172S (a small 4-seat fixed-wing aircraft) which has a typical gross weight of 2,558 pounds would require a fee of \$255.80 to be registered in Michigan. The same aircraft, registered in Ohio, would only cost \$60 based on Ohio's \$15 per seat registration fee. New York and Pennsylvania currently have no state registration fees, and Wisconsin has a weight fee schedule, with the same aircraft considered above would cost \$70 to register annually. Indiana requires only a \$10 annual fee, regardless of weight. In this scenario, Michigan would have the highest registration fee, nearly 3.5 times higher than Wisconsin, and 4 times higher than neighboring Ohio.

AOPA would propose that a fee increase be reasonable, justifiable, and comparable to surrounding states to maintain a healthy aviation ecosystem in Michigan. AOPA would support a phased fee increase proposal or flat rate fees based on weight categories. AOPA would also like to see a policy that would require the revenue generated from these specific fees to be specified for aviation-related capital improvement projects in Michigan.

Submitted Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kyle Lewis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kyle Lewis
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Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
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cc:
Renee Watson, Legislative Director, Sen. Klinefelt