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February 24, 2025

Jim Huffman  
President, Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority (CDRPA) Board of Directors  
Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority  
285 Technology Center Way, Suite 202  
Wenatchee, WA 98801

**TRANSMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION**

[jimh@cdrpa.org](mailto:jimh@cdrpa.org)

**Re: CDRPA Agenda Action Item VI -Feb 25, 2025 – Motion to Declare Mansfield Airport Surplus**

Chair Huffman and Esteemed Members of the CDRPA Board of Directors:

The Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA) is the world's largest aviation membership organization representing the general aviation interests of hundreds of thousands of aircraft owners and pilots across the country, including over 9,000 members from Washington state and several hundred from Wenatchee Valley alone. On behalf of these members, **AOPA requests that you defer decision making with respect to declaring Mansfield airport surplus pending further analysis and study.**

For over 85 years, AOPA has been defending both pilots and airports. Once an airport is sold or otherwise released for non-aviation purposes, the airport is gone forever. While it is well understood that both the liability risks and costs of maintaining an airport to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) safety standards for a sponsor are both real and significant, the AOPA position is that our community would rather see Mansfield airport reinvigorated rather than released.

Although the airport may appear to be a low-traffic asset, declaring it surplus and offering it for sale would be a short-sighted decision that fails to recognize its significant value to the community now and into the future. Despite its modest aviation activity, the airport serves critical functions in local safety, connectivity, and future development that cannot be easily replaced.

First, 8W3 provides an essential emergency resource for Mansfield and its surrounding rural areas. The airport is crucial for rapid response in medical emergencies, natural disasters, and wildfires—common in the region. Its strategic location enables quick access for life-saving flights and emergency equipment. Selling the airport risks losing this critical lifeline, which could jeopardize public safety.

Moreover, while aviation activity may be limited now, the airport supports the local economy in ways that extend beyond the obvious. Farmers, ranchers, and local businesses benefit from the airport's infrastructure, as it provides a convenient location that continues to offer the potential for

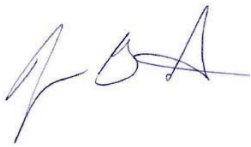
transporting goods and supplies. The airport has untapped potential for growth and selling it prematurely would be a missed opportunity for economic development.

Instead of declaring 8W3 surplus, alternative solutions should be explored to ensure its continued operation while minimizing costs. One viable option is partnering with private aviation companies or local businesses for shared usage of the airport, turning it into a more dynamic space with multi-purpose applications. Another option is applying for grants or state funding aimed at maintaining small airports, which could help offset operational costs. Reimagining Mansfield by repurposing CDRPA resources to create an agriculture or technology incubator campus in conjunction with state universities provides other alternatives. Finally, increasing community engagement with the airport through local events or even pilot training programs could help bolster its relevance and sustainability.

In conclusion, Mansfield airport is more than just a small facility with low aviation activity; it is an integral part of the region's safety, economy, and identity. Declaring it surplus would undermine the entire community's long-term growth potential. Rather than selling it off, the focus should be on creative alternatives that preserve the airport's value and enhance its contributions to Mansfield's long-term future.

Please consider me a resource on this issue and other matters impacting general aviation. I can be reached at email: [brad.schuster@aopa.org](mailto:brad.schuster@aopa.org) or by phone: 202-851-7502.

Sincerely,



Brad Schuster  
Alaska and Northwest Mountain Regional Manager, AOPA

CC:  
CDRPA CEO and Board Members  
CDRPA Director of Airports  
Director, Washington State Department of Transportation, Aviation Division