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August 11, 2025

City of Colville Council Members
170 S. Oak
Colville, WA 99114

TRANSMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Re: Request City Council Final Approval of Draft Airport Layout Plan (ALP)

Dear Colville Mayor and Council Members,

As the world's largest general aviation advocacy organization, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents hundreds of thousands of members worldwide, including nearly 10,000 in Washington State and approximately 20 pilots based at Colville Municipal Airport (63S). It is with great confidence and respect that **we urge your full support for the final Colville Airport Layout Plan (ALP) coming up for consideration** during what I understand will be at the upcoming city council meeting on August 26, 2025.

The city council approved further development of the ALP at your March 25, 2025, meeting, but according to some of our members, there have been some indications of wavering support amongst some of the city council members since then. We urge that particularly those potentially reconsidering their approval to maintain their original position and **vote to approve the final draft—Preferred Alternatives—in full.**

AOPA wholeheartedly supports the outcomes outlined in paragraph 6.8 of the final draft ALP, which reflects an investment in Colville airport's future and articulates a vision centered on community safety, recognition of past investments, and anticipates future demand. It is particularly reassuring that the plan explicitly states that eminent domain will not be used to implement any recommended improvements—a commitment to responsible, community-conscious development. Approval of the ALP would not impact current residents, while offering future enhanced safety and myriad other benefits.

As noted by the Ardurra consultants who developed the draft ALP:

“The City of Colville’s vision of the airport is to create a public facility that is safe and serves the community by providing essential services, such as emergency response, forest and wildlife management, economic development, education, and jobs.”

The most recent WSDOT-A Aviation Economic Impact Study for 63S reminds us that the airport generates approximately \$288,000 of annual total economic impact; this is accomplished with a runway length of just 2,700. Imagine the economic dividends and jobs that expanded airport capabilities would enable with another 1,000+ feet of runway as recommended by Runway

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Alternative 3! Lengthening the runway would undoubtedly improve safety, operational capabilities, and adaptability to evolving aviation demands. Importantly, this extension *would not* enable commercial airline operations. Moreover, a longer runway would enhance critical services, particularly aerial firefighting. Larger firefighting aircraft could operate from 63S, ensuring faster response, increased fuel throughput, and personnel transport to regional wildfire zones.

An extended runway is not the only major infrastructure benefit that ALP approval would provide. According to the consultants' final draft ALP, in addition to other infrastructure enhancements, 13 hangars are also needed to accommodate growth at the airport over the next 20 years. General aviation industry estimates indicate that, by themselves, hangar rentals and land leases can account for 20–40% of revenue directly related to aeronautical activity at general aviation airports. The aircraft associated with this added capacity will not only help the airport become more financially self-sustaining through consumption of products and services but **will also generate increased tax revenue for the city of Colville.**

Finally, approving this draft ALP as final keeps the door open for state and federal funding opportunities. Recognized under the Washington Aviation System Plan (WASP), 63S is eligible for vital Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and WSDOT-A support. Approval of this ALP will provide a roadmap enabling continued access to those resources, ensuring the city safeguards the airport's role as a strategic asset for years to come. This important decision will become your legacy as you commit to a forward-looking plan that balances safety, community needs, practicality, and economic vitality—and serves the city and its pilots, the State, and the region for decades to come.

Should you or your staff wish to discuss this or any other general aviation-related matter, I welcome the opportunity. Please feel free to contact me at brad.schuster@aopa.org or 202-851-7502.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Sincerely,



Brad Schuster, C.M.

Northwest Mountain Region Manager, AOPA

CC:

FAA Northwest Mountain Region Airports District Office (OR, WA)

Ann Richart, Director, Washington Department of Transportation, Aviation Division

Dave Garringer, Airport Manager

Wayne Reiter, Aviation Planner, Ardurra