



Washington Seaplane Pilots Association

February 11, 2013

The Honorable Tracey Eide, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Curtis King, Co-Chair  
Washington State Senate Committee on Transportation  
311 J.A. Cherberg Bldg.  
P.O. Box 40468  
Olympia, WA 98504-0468

Dear Senators Eide and King:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), National Business Aviation Association (NBAA), Pacific Northwest Business Aviation Association (PNBAA), the Washington Pilots Association (WPA) and the Washington Seaplane Pilots Association (WSPA) collectively represent the general aviation (GA) interests of over 12,000 aviators and 260 businesses using GA in Washington State. For many years, our associations have worked individually and together to ensure the safety, future viability and development of general aviation airports and their facilities as a part of our national transportation system.

We write today to offer our support for Senate Bill 5430 as originally introduced, or any other legislative vehicle that would allocate an increased percentage of Washington State's existing aircraft excise tax collections to the operations of the Washington State Aviation Division.

General Aviation is a critically important part of the state's transportation infrastructure and economy. Washington's 136 public use airports connect the state's people and businesses to the region and the world, generating an economic impact from GA of \$3.2 billion of the total \$51 billion impact of aviation. Washington aviation supports over 7,600 jobs and is home to 59 charter flight companies, 116 repair stations, 64 fixed-based operators and 24 flight schools.

Today, the Washington State Aeronautics Division is funded from two sources: an \$0.11 per gallon tax on non-airline/non-military aviation fuel, and an aircraft excise tax. While all of the \$5.7 million received biennially from the aviation fuel tax is allocated for airport improvements and other

aeronautical uses in the state, 90% of the aircraft excise taxes collected from aircraft owners are used for non-aeronautical purposes. In Washington State, there is an existing \$600 million funding shortfall over the next twenty years to address the safety and improvement requirements of the state's 136 public use airports. Allocation of the full amount of the existing aircraft excise taxes to the aviation system that generated that revenue would make an additional \$581,000 available biennially for critical airport improvements statewide.

While not a large sum in the state's overall budget, it could be critically important in allowing the aviation division to access federal funds to help maintain the significant public investment in airports across Washington. Without these additional resources to adequately fund, maintain and improve Washington State's airport system, there is significant risk of diminishing the total \$51 billion dollar economic impact and 248,000 jobs created by the state's airports. The allocation of all of the state's existing aircraft excise tax collections to the airport system is a small but important step to preserving and expanding these impacts.

On behalf of our collective members, AOPA, NBAA, PNBA, WPA, and WSPA appreciate your support of Senate Bill 5430. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact any of us.



David Ulane  
Northwest Mountain Regional Manager  
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association  
(301) 695-2094



Kristi Ivey  
Northwest Regional Representative  
National Business Aviation Association  
(206) 434-5688



Alan Burnett  
Director, Legislative Affairs  
Pacific Northwest Business Aviation Association



Dave Lucke  
President  
Washington Pilots Association  
(509) 994-0323



Stephen Ratzlaff  
President  
Washington Seaplane Pilots Association