

An open letter to the residents of Biddeford



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION
421 Aviation Way • Frederick, MD 21701-4798
Telephone (301) 695-2000 • FAX (301) 695-2375

Dear Biddeford voter:

I am writing to you as the leader of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, representing more than 415,000 of the nation's general aviation pilots, more than 2,100 of whom live in Maine.

Your community is currently involved in a lively debate about whether or not to keep Biddeford Municipal Airport open. You've heard about obligations and the contract your town undertook when it accepted federal money for airport improvements. You've heard arguments over how much money the airport costs and how much it makes.

Not surprisingly, there has been a lot of misinformation about the airport and general aviation. As you consider the discussion of a voter referendum on keeping or closing the airport, it's important to have the facts about general aviation, Biddeford Airport and why both are important to you.

Here are three areas we feel you should carefully consider.

- 1. Biddeford Airport helps maintain open spaces in your community. Airports are green space.** Sure, Biddeford Airport is not Clifford Park or Rotary Park, but neither is it the hundreds of townhouses, apartments, or condos that are typically developed on closed airport land, sapping city services like sewer and water, or adding hundreds of cars to the streets and students to the schools.
- 2. Biddeford Airport directly contributes more than \$3.5 million per year to the local economy.** That's no "made up" number. That's real economic impact based on actual revenues and proven economic models. This impact creates jobs for local residents.
- 3. Biddeford Airport provides this area with access to the rest of the country.** It's Biddeford's on- and off-ramp from an interstate highway system – only this one's in the air. Closing the airport would be like closing the ramps to and from Rte. 111. Towns that have community airports can leverage them to attract new businesses. Increasingly, far-flung businesses look for easy air access when deciding whether to relocate or where to open a new facility.

Biddeford faces some significant issues. Whether or not to keep Biddeford Airport open should not be one of them. Successfully marketing the airport could provide Biddeford with an expanded tax base, more tourism and relief from some of its economic pressures.

Thank you,

Phil Boyer
President

Member of International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations

Since 1939, AOPA has been making flying safer and more accessible to the nation's General Aviation pilots. With more than 415,000 members, it's the world's largest aviation association. Our web address is www.aopa.org



General Aviation – GA is everything that flies – except scheduled airlines and the military. To learn more about how GA helps your community, please visit our website:

GAServingAmerica.org