

June 15, 2009

The Honorable Ted Strickland
Governor of Ohio
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215-6108

Dear Governor Strickland,

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is a not-for-profit membership organization that represents the general aviation interests of over 415,000 members nationwide – including over 13,700 in Ohio. Since 1939, AOPA has been committed to ensuring the safety, future viability, and development of general aviation airports and their facilities as a part of our national transportation system. I am writing to urge you to consider the important economic and safety implications of Ohio Airport Grant Program funding as members of the House and Senate confer over the final budget package.

The Airport Grant Program provides grants to county and municipal airports for pavement maintenance and obstacle removal projects. Currently over one third of Ohio's 170 airports suffer from deficient pavement conditions on runways and taxiways -- and this number will undoubtedly grow without sufficient infrastructure investment. Air safety at and around Ohio's airports will also decline, as the program funds the removal of obstacles which penetrate runway approaches and pose hazards to aircraft.

With 170 airports throughout Ohio, general aviation affects every county, city, and district in the state -- generating thousands of jobs throughout Ohio and billions of dollars of state revenue from taxes. Beyond commercial airline service, county and municipal airports are integral to Ohio's multimodal transportation system, efficiently connecting small businesses, law enforcement, disaster relief, medical care, and other important services to remote communities that are not served by major airports.

Aviation infrastructure funding is especially important as we look past the current economic turbulence to new opportunities for growth. Leaders in other aviation-rich states, like Governor Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania, are making significant investments in airports to “...attract new business and create jobs.” I urge you to offer leadership and guidance to the Budget Conference Committee to ensure that sufficient airport investment is included in the final budget as a key component to the economic recovery in Ohio.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue. If you or your staff has any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or our Vice President of Airports and State Advocacy, Greg Pecoraro, 301-695-2200.

Very truly yours,



Craig L. Fuller
President and CEO