

September 10, 2009

The Honorable Janet Napolitano  
Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Napolitano,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, representing more than 416,000 members, to commend the Department of Homeland Security for its success in balancing security and accessibility during President Obama's recent travels.

AOPA is pleased that the willingness of the TSA, U.S. Secret Service, and the FAA to work with the general aviation community allowed Martha's Vineyard Airport to remain open during President Obama's weeklong visit to the island. AOPA strongly encourages keeping airports and airspace open whenever possible. We would like to offer our general aviation expertise to federal agencies and encourage you to seek stakeholder participation on future issues regarding VIP movement and restricted airspace.

Since September 11, 2001, the restricted airspace surrounding the President has become quite large, often 60 nm in diameter. This includes a no-fly zone that grounds all aircraft operations throughout the duration of the Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR). The restrictions have a devastating impact on affected airports and communities, bringing air traffic to a halt and impeding local commerce. The procedures used at Martha's Vineyard during the President's stay, which included creating a gateway airport system and security screening models, proved that security and protection of the President can be maintained, while still retaining public access to airspace and airports.

While the procedures developed for Martha's Vineyard were somewhat complex for pilots, they represent a step in the right direction. AOPA encourages the Department of Homeland Security to expand upon and refine this approach when considering needs

The Honorable Janet Napolitano  
Page Two

for future events. AOPA also requests that industry participation be encouraged in the working groups that develop these procedures, allowing those most familiar with the intricacies of general aviation operations to share their insight. As with other partnership security measures, AOPA looks forward to working with DHS to find practical and workable solutions to the challenges that arise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Fuller', with a large, stylized initial 'C'.

Craig L. Fuller  
President and CEO