



421 Aviation Way
Frederick, Maryland 21701

T. 301-695-2000
F. 301-695-2375

www.aopa.org

November 28, 2011

Mr. Tom LaCroix
Chairman
Grand Junction Regional Airport Authority
2828 Walker Field Dr.
Grand Junction, CO. 81502

Dear Chairman LaCroix:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of over 400,000 members, more than two-thirds of the nation's pilots, including nearly 11,000 in the State of Colorado. AOPA is committed to ensuring the future viability, safety and economic development of general aviation facilities, without unjust restrictions or discrimination, as a vital part of a state and national transportation system.

We are writing to express our serious concerns related to a number of ongoing issues at the Grand Junction Regional Airport. At a time when local governments are striving to attract additional businesses and revenue, it appears that Grand Junction Regional Airport (GJT) is doing just the opposite - driving business and general aviation activity from the airport.

What began as a wildlife control fence funded by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has morphed into a restrictive and unreasonable access control system that is causing undue hardship not only on general aviation businesses located on the airport, but also on the public who wish to conduct business with those companies and individuals. Whatever unmet security needs existed that needed to be addressed by the airport, it appears that the solution, may have resolved one problem at the expense of creating many more.

In 2008, AOPA identified problems that would result from the implementation of the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Security Directive 1542-04-08F/G, (SD) in which a complicated patchwork of access control restrictions would emerge throughout the nation, and expressed its concerns to Federal officials. As each airport attempted individually to comply with the additional measures called for in the SD, combined with the regional interpretation of the Federal Security Director, we feared that general aviation would be unfairly singled out. Sadly, with the solution that has been implemented at Grand Junction we see our worst fears being realized. With that in mind, AOPA is reaching out to TSA Headquarters to make sure that all possible avenues are explored to find less burdensome alternatives for GJT that will fulfill the security needs but still allow the flexibility and efficiency that is characteristic of general aviation.

While AOPA recognizes that GJT is a Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) Part 139 airport with Part 121 airline operations, and thus required to meet the requirements of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) under Transportation Security Regulation (TSR) 1542, it is our belief that the airport's implementation of these regulations is excessive. The creation of unintended consequences is having a detrimental impact on tenants and businesses located on the airport.

We have also been advised by our members that the airport has been unwilling to negotiate lease extensions and renewals. It's been reported to us that the reason provided to those individuals seeking lease renewals that such is prohibited by the FAA. That simply is not the case.

Mr. Tom LaCroix
Page 2
November 28, 2011

The FAA's Airport Compliance Handbook¹, FAA Order 5190.6B clearly defines the agency's interest in lease matters at a publicly funded airport. In relevant part (Section 12, page 2), this order states:

12.3. Review of Agreements.

a. Scope of FAA Interest in Leases.

The FAA does not review all leases, and there is no requirement for a sponsor to obtain FAA approval before entering into a lease.....

Therefore, the FAA does not prohibit an airport sponsor from entering into a lease for aeronautical facilities nor does the agency prohibit renewal of existing leases. These decisions are left to the local airport sponsor to undertake.

AOPA is committed to working with TSA, FAA and the Airport Authority to resolve these issues, both locally and on a national level. We strongly encourage the Board to explore alternative solutions that will adequately address the security deficiencies uncovered without unnecessarily restricting or curtailing general aviation at Grand Junction. While we understand that past alternative methods of compliance that had been proposed by AOPA and a security consultant hired by the airport were rejected by the Federal Security Director, we are hopeful that the Airport and TSA will continue to explore alternative measures that meet Federal regulations and still allow general aviation to exist at GJT. Please be sure that AOPA will strongly advocate for a solution that better meets the needs of the general aviation community.

Sincerely,



Bill Dunn
Vice President
Airport Advocacy



Craig J. Spence
Vice President
Operations & International Affairs

cc: Honorable Tom Kenyon, Mayor
City of Grand Junction

Ms. Janet Rowland, Chair
Mesa Board of County Commissioners

Grand Junction Regional Airport Authority Board

Mr. Morgan Hamon
Mr. Denny Granum
Mr. Bill Pitts
Mr. Doug Simons
Mr. David Hibberd
Mr. John Stevens

Mr. Rex Tippetts, Airport Manager

¹ http://www.faa.gov/airports/resources/publications/orders/compliance_5190_6/media/5190_6b_chap12.pdf