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April 23, 2012

Mr. T. Anthony Lannelli
Chairman
Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority
Board of Governors
3311 Airport Road
Allentown, PA 18109

Dear Chairman Lannelli:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of over 400,000 members nationwide, including nearly 13,000 in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. AOPA is committed to ensuring the future viability and economic development of general aviation airports and facilities to support aviation demand. General Aviation aircraft operations are a vital part of the state and national transportation system and that includes the Queen City Airport (XLL) in Allentown.

We are writing to advise the Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority (LNAA) of our strong opposition to the potential sale and closure of any portion of the Queen City Airport. We have been observing the ongoing rhetoric of a member of the LNNA who seems to be driving his own personal agenda for a short term gain for his city versus a long-term gain for the LNAA and the greater Allentown area. We have also expressed our opposition to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in Washington, DC, and have had discussions with members of the Congressional delegation for the area. We are pleased to note that the local newspaper, The Morning Call, indicates that some members of the Authority Board are increasingly frustrated with this individual's activities, and are "weary of his effort to put Queen City on the auction block."

The newspaper accounts of LNAA meetings over the past few months have made for interesting reading. The Morning Call April 17, 2012 story on the Authority's approval of a project at XLL surprised us when we read that this Board member had recorded his conversation with an FAA official and then played that voice mail message recording in public. We wonder if the entire message was played or just a small portion of a longer explanation of the question posed to the FAA.

While we fully understand the fiscal constraints imposed on the LNAA as the result of previous litigation and judicial awards against the Authority, it is our belief that other means exist to fulfill the payment of this award by the Authority as has been reported in local media stories. It is unfortunate that this private agenda is consuming a large amount of Authority business and the valuable time of members of the Board.

Mr. T. Anthony Lannelli

Page 2

April 23, 2012

As I am certain you already know, XLL is obligated to be operated as an airport under a number of legally binding agreements. The airport is federal surplus property conveyed initially to the City of Allentown under a Quit Claim Deed with covenants. Additionally, the airport is obligated under grant assurances to the FAA under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP). Most recently, when the airport was conveyed by Allentown to LNAA in order for the city to avoid significant civil penalties by the FAA regarding airport revenue diversion by the city, a Settlement Agreement entered into by the parties conveys all previous federal obligations to LNAA and requires that the airport be operated as an airport in perpetuity.

According to a 2011 Economic Impact of Aviation study conducted for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Aviation Bureau, the annual economic impact of Queen City Airport is over \$10.5 million. Additionally, as part of the study research, a survey of businesses was conducted seeking to quantify the decision-making process used when a business considers locating new facilities. Access to a near general aviation airport was one of the factors listed.

Unfortunately, with all the controversy surrounding the airport, it is unlikely that any business would be willing to invest potentially millions of dollars in constructing new facilities either on the airport or off the airport. We understand there is currently demand for new hangar facilities on the airport and LNAA is moving forward with infrastructure improvement plans that may make these facilities possible in the future.

In closing, we would like to reiterate that AOPA is strongly opposed to the sale of any portion of the airport for non-aviation purposes, and appreciate that most members of the Authority seem to share that sentiment. We will undertake any actions we deem necessary to ensure that XLL continues to operate as a public use airport and support the aviation transportation needs of the general aviation community.

Respectfully,



Bill Dunn
Vice President
Airport Advocacy

cc: LNAA Board of Governors