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May 25, 2012

The Honorable Jason Haas
The Honorable Patricia Jursik
Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 North 9th Street, RM 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Supervisors Haas and Jursik:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of more than 400,000 members, including 6,520 in the state of Wisconsin. On behalf of our membership, AOPA is committed to ensuring the continued viability, growth and development of general aviation and airports in Wisconsin and the United States.

I would like to express our appreciation for hosting the meeting with the General Mitchell International Airport's Northeast Hangar tenants on May 14, 2012. I was one of the participants listening in via telephone. It was apparent that the tenants had some specific concerns and were out of the loop with the 128th Air Refueling Wing's plans with respect to the property they have their hangars on. Many of the issues that come across my desk are avoidable with good communications between airport sponsors, management and users/tenants. AOPA hopes that the Board of Supervisors will work with the airport management to ensure that they receive timely notification and have an opportunity to have their concerns addressed if the project moves forward.

AOPA has the utmost respect for our men and women in uniform and the officers and airmen of the 128th are no exception. As you heard in the meeting, the general aviation tenants in the Northeast Hangars support the 128th's mission and wish to see them remain at Mitchell. We do have concerns about displacing almost 50 aircraft from the Northeast Hangar area. They must be accommodated on the field under Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidance. We respectfully request that the Board, working with the airport management, come up with a plan to do that in the event that the 128th's expansion takes place. That will provide those tenants with assurances that they will be able to continue their operations at Mitchell and that they have not been forgotten. Additionally, including the General Aviation community in the planning process is very important and necessary. Anything less is a grave disservice to them.

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AOPA also strongly recommends involving the FAA's Minneapolis Airports District Office in this process so that there is a clear understanding of what can and cannot be done under the terms of the FAA grant assurances and obligations assumed by the airport and the County as the airport sponsor. Their input will be very helpful in assuring a good land swap and proper resolution of the associated concerns with the Northeast Hangars.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this matter. If AOPA can be of any further assistance, please contact me at 301-695-2119.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John L. Collins". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the printed name.

John L. Collins
Manager
Airport Policy

cc:

Mr. C. Barry Bateman, Airport Director, General Mitchell International Airport
Mr. David M. Greene, Director, Bureau of Aeronautics, WI DOT
Mr. Steve Obenauer, Manager, FAA Minneapolis Airports District Office