

Members of the City of San Jose Airport Commission:

At your last meeting, the airport provided responses to the commission related to questions I asked the airport in writing last year. Some of those responses lacked adequate information and I responded to the commission clarifying the responses and providing additional information as appropriate. In that vein, I want to let the commission know that several of the issues I brought up are not unique to SJC - In fact, the issue of General Aviation fees, facilities, and lack of competition are going to be the subject of a Congressional hearing today (March 9).

### **House Aviation Panel Turns Focus onto General Aviation**

As it continues its path toward the drafting of a comprehensive FAA reauthorization bill, the House aviation subcommittee is turning its attention to general aviation issues. The subcommittee will hold a hearing on Thursday at 10 a.m. entitled "Securing the Future of General Aviation."

Rep. Sam Graves (R-Missouri), who chairs the full Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, has said he plans to include a title in the FAA reauthorization bill on general aviation for the first time. Such a section would bring more attention to the sector, Graves said.

Scheduled to testify on Thursday are AOPA president and CEO Mark Baker; EAA chairman and CEO Jack Pelton; Rick Crider, executive v-p of airport/railport and military relations at Port San Antonio on behalf of the American Association of Airport Executives; and NATA president and CEO Curt Castagna.

The hearing is the second on the House side on FAA reauthorization this year, with an earlier session in February held on aviation safety.

The House and Senate have until September 30 to finish work on the FAA bill before the current authorization expires. Graves has indicated a desire to have the initial version drafted by July 1, according to NATA.

AOPA and a number of aviation organizations will be testifying at the hearing and they will be discussing this very issue. The following draft is provided to the commission so that you understand the depth and breadth of the issue and its impacts on the aviation system. As you will note, a number of aviation organizations have signed on to the letter and more are signing every day.

March 9, 2023

Honorable Sam Graves, Chairman  
House Committee on Transportation &  
Infrastructure  
2167 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member  
House Committee on Transportation &  
Infrastructure  
2167 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Garret Graves, Chairman  
House Aviation Subcommittee  
2167 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Steve Cohen, Ranking Member  
House Aviation Subcommittee  
2167 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Messrs. Graves, Larsen, Graves, and Cohen,

We write today to express our strong support for an effort being led by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) that calls for the construction or implementation of transient parking ramps at public-use airports.

Our organizations represent hundreds of thousands of pilots who own and operate virtually every general aviation aircraft type in the fleet, and we cannot agree more with AOPA and applaud their efforts. We believe individual owner-operators of aircraft should not be required to pay fees to a private business on a public-use airport when their products and services are not used, needed, or requested.

Most Fixed-Based Operators (FBOs) provide excellent service and are integral to our nation's aviation fabric. Unfortunately, there is a lack of competition at many airports in our system which has led to increasing prices and above normal profits. We have and continue to see unprecedented consolidation in the FBO market, which has led to monopolistic behaviors at many of our nation's public-use airports. Clearly, private equity firms have prioritized returns on their investments and placed the burden on the backs of pilots.

Simply said, we need policies at federally funded airports that create competition and help incentivize aviation activity, not unfettered practices that allow users of our aviation system to be penalized. Unlike the airlines, private pilots do not have a process available to negotiate fees and charges at airports.

Today, pilots are subject to a multitude of fees including tie down fees, security fees, maintenance fees, building fees, handling fees, habitat fees (offset for FBO employees working in high-cost areas), and others even when no fuel is purchased or when their services have not been requested. Many FBOs waive or reduce these fees when fuel is purchased but those entities most often have extraordinarily high, above market, fuel prices.

Again, we firmly believe policies at federally obligated public-use airports should allow access without requiring private pilots to pay businesses for something they did not need or request. We also believe public-use airports should be required to provide access to an itinerant ramp for parking with the ability to impose a fair and reasonable fee.

In order for general aviation to grow and prosper in this nation, we respectfully request the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee address this issue in the impending FAA Reauthorization.

We are more than happy to provide any additional information the Committee may need.

Sincerely,

Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association  
Augusta Flying Club  
California Pilots Association  
Cirrus Owners and Pilots Association  
Citation Jet Pilots Association  
Commemorative Air Force  
Connellsville Flying Club  
Corporate Aircraft Association  
Courtesy Aircraft Sales  
Grumman Owners and Pilots Association  
Merritt Island Flying Club, EAA Chapter 724  
New England Flying Club  
North American Trainer Association  
Pilatus Owners and Pilots Association  
Redlands Airport Association  
San Carlos Airport Association  
Sky Bryce Flying Club, LLC  
TBM Owners and Pilots Association  
Veterans Airlift Command

The commission also received information regarding Moffett Field and the impacts it has on the City of San Jose tax revenues and SJC airport revenues. Moffett Field has just opened a new fuel farm - 150,000 gallons of Jet Fuel. Remember, Moffett has very limited takeoffs and landings and no air carrier operations. For comparison, the FBO's at SJC have 80,000 gallons and 60,000 gallons gallons of Jet Fuel storage at their facilities respectively. That significant difference in capacity should give pause to the notion that Moffett Field operations are not impacting SJC and the businesses operating here.

**#Avports** at Moffett Field is preparing to take over our new fuel farm! Now in the final stages of construction, we are looking forward to three 50,000 gallon Jet-A fuel tanks and three 12,000 gallon diesel fuel tanks for our thirsty customers! HUGE thanks to **Puneet Moonach** with **#CBRE** and **#Swinerton** Construction!

