



April 18, 2012

Dear Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

As you plan to mark up the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill, the General Aviation Airport Coalition (GAAC) seeks your support for certain provisions included in the bill approved by the Subcommittee on April 17, 2012. Specifically, GAAC supports the \$3.35 billion included for the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), which helps to offset the cost of vital airport improvement projects, such as runway resurfacing and facility safety enhancements. In addition, GAAC supports a provision that would allow smaller airports to benefit from a 95/5 cost share for certain AIP projects.

The recently-passed FAA Reauthorization changed the cost share for AIP projects from 95/5 to 90/10, which has disrupted many airport projects that have been budgeted and planned for years. State and local governments and airport sponsors are scrambling to find the additional five percent to meet the required nonfederal share. This is a huge burden, especially, to phased projects at smaller airports that began before enactment of the FAA Reauthorization bill on February 14, 2012.

General aviation airports are the backbone of our country's aviation system, comprising 90.2% of our nation's airports. In addition, the general aviation industry is an integral part of the U.S. economy - creating jobs, generating revenue, attracting business and industry, providing a transportation lifeline to communities across the country, helping businesses succeed, and supporting people and communities in times of crisis. General aviation's overall economic output in the U.S. is estimated at \$150 billion annually, supporting more than 1.2 million jobs.

Like many sectors of the economy, GA airports are struggling to stay afloat in the current economic climate, and receive a majority of their federal assistance through AIP. In order to secure local assistance for the nonfederal share, GA airports are forced to compete with emergency services, schools, and other important infrastructure projects. We hope that you will support the Subcommittee's approved funding level for AIP, and its effort to ease the blow of the cost share change for smaller airports in FY 2013 to allow them to move forward with current projects as planned, and budget accordingly for the future.

Thank you for your consideration of this priority request.

Respectfully,

Richard K. Lewis
Chairman, General Aviation Airport Coalition
Concord Regional Airport Director