



September 8, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

With today's return to Washington of the Senate and the House, I am writing to urge you and your colleagues in Congress to quickly pass a multi-year Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill that raises the cap on Passenger Facility Charges (PFCs), increases Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding and rejects a controversial Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting proposal that could severely impact airports of all sizes and jeopardize commercial air service to small communities.

The current FAA extension expires on September 30th – just a few weeks away. With the pending deadline fast approaching, it's time for Congress to redouble its efforts and quickly pass a multi-year FAA reauthorization bill. Every month that goes by without the PFC increase proposed in H.R. 915, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2009, costs airports approximately \$100 million in forgone revenue – funds that could be used to improve aviation safety and security and create jobs around the country. Every year that goes by without the higher funding levels proposed for AIP in the House and Senate versions of the FAA bill has similar consequences.

It has been almost two years since Vision 100, the last FAA reauthorization bill, expired. Congress has been unable to pass a multi-year FAA bill since then, and lawmakers have approved a series of short-term extensions instead. Airports appreciate the efforts to extend FAA programs and prevent lapses in aviation excise taxes. However, short-term extensions and uncertain funding levels can be very disruptive to airport executives as they try to plan their construction projects.

As you know, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 915 on May 21st. The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee approved its version of the FAA bill – S. 451, the FAA Air Transportation and Modernization Act of 2009 – two months later. Airports are now urging the Senate to take the next step and pass an FAA reauthorization bill so that lawmakers in both chambers can iron out their differences and send a multi-year bill to the President's desk.

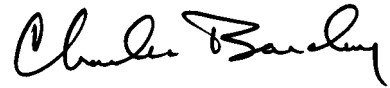
Lawmakers can help airports prepare for future demand, increase aviation safety and create much-needed jobs by passing a multi-year FAA bill that raises the PFC cap to \$7.50, indexes the cap for construction cost inflation and increases AIP funding by at least \$100 million per year. Airports are also urging Congress to increase funding for small community programs and to reject a controversial proposal that could force airports to comply with excessive National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) without improving aviation safety.

According to an independent Transportation Research Board report released this summer it would cost airports almost \$4 billion in the first year to comply with NFPA standards. If enacted into law, this unnecessary proposal could dramatically increase staffing, training, infrastructure and equipment requirements for airports of all sizes and jeopardize commercial air service to small communities.

On behalf of airport executives around the country, I urge you and your colleagues to pass a multi-year FAA reauthorization bill before the current extension expires on September 30th that includes the airport priorities listed above. Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you or a member of your staff should have any questions about this matter, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles Barclay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "C".

Charles M. Barclay, A.A.E.
President
American Association of Airport Executives