

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 9, 2016

The Honorable John Thune  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson:

We write to you today regarding the many air traffic control towers throughout the country waiting on the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to complete a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) to determine their eligibility for the Federal Contract Tower (FCT) Program. We ask you include language that would effectively end the agency's administrative prohibition in forthcoming legislation to reauthorize and reform the FAA.

As you know, the FAA has not produced new BCA ratios for requesting towers since the agency informed Congress of its plans to develop and implement a revised benefit-cost methodology for the FCT Program in April 2014. Since that time, the FAA has announced further delays and is now expected to extend the current moratorium until at least March 2017. These continued delays are unacceptable. Including language to advance pending requests for admission into the FCT program from new entrants, as well as cost share participants seeking full federal participation based on their eligibility under existing BCA criteria would be a positive step for the numerous communities negatively affected by FAA delay. Such an approach would not have an impact on current airport participants, and would only allow new FCT Program airports if funds are available.

The FCT Program has been in place for more than 30 years and is a prime example of an effective public-private partnership between government and the private sector to improve aviation safety. Currently, 253 airports and their surrounding communities participate in the program. These airports not only support greater aviation civilian safety and security they also contribute to increased military readiness, all while operating in one of the FAA's most cost-effective programs.

Congress has demonstrated numerous times—in bipartisan and bicameral fashion—support for the FCT Program. Given the unique successes of the program and the increasing likelihood of further FAA inaction, we request that you address this issue in your committee's reauthorization of federal aviation policies and programs.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information on this matter. We look forward to working with you to ensure the continued success of this program.

Sincerely,

Bill Cassidy, M.D.

Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senator

John Cornyn

John Cornyn  
United States Senator

Rob Portman

Rob Portman  
United States Senator

David Vitter

David Vitter  
United States Senator

Roger Wicker

Roger Wicker  
United States Senator