

July 13, 2017

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative DeFazio:

As a member of the House Rural Caucus, next week you will be asked to cast an important vote to protect this nation's vibrant general aviation community and its vital connection to economic development in rural America **by opposing H.R. 2997, the 21st Century AIRR Act**. The general aviation community supports modernization and reform of the FAA. Ironically, it is the general aviation community – not the airlines – which are most active in advocating for, and deploying, cutting-edge GPS technology. Further, reform of the FAA does not require the dramatic changes in the management of our nation's air traffic control system proposed by the 21st Century AIRR Act.

The legislation undermines incentives to invest in rural America and its supporters vastly overstate the effectiveness of provisions purportedly protecting general aviation's right to access the important airports and airways connecting rural America with the rest of the nation. For those reasons, 117 general aviation groups from across the nation have united to oppose this legislation. The proposal makes little fiscal sense as the Congressional Budget Office recently concluded the AIRR Act will add billions annually to the budget deficit.

NATA represents the interests of the general aviation business community before Congress and federal, state and local government agencies. Our nearly 2,300 member companies provide a broad range of aeronautical services to the aviation community. Smaller companies account for the majority of NATA's membership and most NATA members have fewer than 40 employees and are designated as small businesses by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

H.R. 2997, the 21st Century AIRR Act:

Undermines general aviation in America: Despite statements by some in Congress that claim to speak for us, the nation's general aviation community is adamantly opposed to H.R. 2997. In a recent policy statement, the 117 general aviation groups noted the reforms proposed in the legislation "will produce uncertainty and unintended consequences without achieving the desired outcomes." Importantly, the legislation's provisions purportedly "protecting" general aviation access to important airports and airways are nothing more than smoke and mirrors.

Reduces investment in rural America: The privatized air traffic control system proposed by the legislation is funded by airlines and governed by a board of special interests whose fiduciary responsibilities are "solely and exclusively to the corporation." In that construct, it is difficult to envision continued investment in a national airspace system that benefits all Americans but

rather one that shrinks investment to meet the needs of those funding the corporation. Further, on a day-to-day basis, is it reasonable or realistic to expect the CEO of such a corporation to act contrary to the best interests of the group that represents such an outsized portion of the corporation's revenues?

Eliminates Congressional oversight: Congress is an important voice in protecting general aviation and rural America and we urge you not to cede this responsibility to an unelected group of special interests. Privatizing ATC will eliminate Congressional oversight and its ability to ensure balanced aviation investment in all parts of the country. In addition, while air traffic control modernization creates great potential for increased system efficiency, it also creates potential unintended consequences. For example, for people near the approach paths of our busiest airports, the ability of Congress to intervene on their behalf on noise issues will be seriously reduced – if not eliminated – by the creation of such a corporation.

The general aviation community has long appreciated your willingness to stand up for us and rural America. While we understand the enormous pressure you will be under to support this legislation, enactment of the 21st Century AIRR Act will have enormous negative ramifications for your district. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to our continued work together toward maintaining and improving the world's safest aviation system.

Sincerely,



Martin H. Hiller
President
National Air Transportation Association