



January 29, 2017

Representative Louise Stutes, Co-Chair
Representative Adam Wool, Co-Chair
House Transportation Committee
State Capitol, Room 17
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representatives Stutes and Wool:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is the world's largest aviation organization, representing the general aviation interests of pilots and aircraft owners, including over 3,200 of our members in the state of Alaska. Since 1939, AOPA has been committed to ensuring the safety, future viability and development of general aviation as an integral part of our nation's transportation system. I am writing in support of HB 60, which increases aviation motor fuel tax rates to maintain the rural airport system.

While no one is anxious to increase the cost to fly, we recognize the fiscal situation facing Alaska. AOPA supports HB 60, which increases the motor fuel tax on aviation gasoline and jet fuel from current levels in two stages to 14.1 cents/gallon and 9.6 cents/gallon respectively. The continued viability of the Rural Alaska Airport System, operated by the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOTPF), is important to our members—and to the public who relies on airports as a key component of Alaska's transportation system. It is our understanding that the revenue collected from these funds is tracked in a separate account within the General Fund, and in compliance with FAA grant assurances, is used to maintain the airport system.

We have worked with DOTPF to evaluate alternative methods to provide support for the operation of the 240 rural airports. We believe that this increase in motor fuel tax is more equitable than other options that were considered, and does not expand state government to collect the additional revenue.

AOPA is pleased that the department continues to streamline the operations of the rural airport system, and will continue to work with them to seek further efficiencies that should help control costs.

Thank you for considering this legislation. I look forward to working with you and your committee on this issue.

Sincerely,

Tom George
Alaska Regional Manager