



February 5, 2016

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Representative Shelley Hughes, Co-Chair
House Transportation Committee
State Capitol, Room 17
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representatives Foster and Hughes:

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.

While no one is anxious to increase the cost to fly, we recognize the fiscal situation facing Alaska. AOPA supports HB 249, which increases the motor fuel tax on aviation gasoline and jet fuel from current levels to ten cents/gallon. The continued operation of the Rural Alaska Airport System is important to our members, and to the public who relies on airports as a key component of Alaska's transportation system.

We have worked with the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOTPF) to evaluate alternative methods to provide support for the operation of the 247 rural airports. We believe that this modest 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. We also support the Aviation Advisory Board's recommendation to index the tax increase, or to create a sunset provision should the price of oil increase in the future.

AOPA is pleased that DOTPF has taken the first steps toward streamlining the operations of the airport system, and will continue to work with them to seek further efficiencies that should help control costs of the airport system.

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

Sincerely,

Tom George
Alaska Regional Manager