

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 20, 2015

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to include language ensuring full and dedicated funding for the Contract Tower Program as part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 budget for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The President's FY 2016 Budget request proposes to eliminate the dedicated funding language which was included in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235).

Full and dedicated funding for the Contract Tower Program is critical to ensuring that operations continue through FY 2016 at the 252 Federal Aviation Administration contract towers across the country. Restricting or reducing the operations of contract towers would have a substantial, negative impact on general aviation safety, the efficiency of large commercial airports, emergency medical operations, law enforcement, agriculture activities and businesses throughout the United States.

The contract tower program is one of the FAA's most cost-effective programs. Contract towers handle approximately 28 percent of the nation's air traffic control tower operations, yet they account for only 14 percent of the FAA's total tower operations budget. Additionally, the average contract tower operates at one-third the cost of a federal control tower, though it is held to the same standard of excellence.

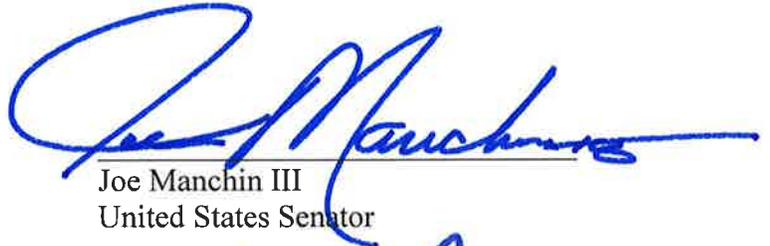
Providing full and dedicated funding language for the Contract Tower Program is necessary to ensure FAA appropriately funds the program as it manages the budgetary constraints of the coming fiscal year. It will provide certainty to local communities and protect this important and long-standing aviation safety program from being targeted for disproportionate cuts or elimination of service at certain airports.

As Congress has done in past fiscal years, we urge you to include full and dedicated funding for the Contract Tower Program in the Fiscal Year 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Contract towers have played a central role in managing the safety and efficiency of our nation's complex airspace for over three decades, and we look forward to working with you to preserve and promote their future success.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



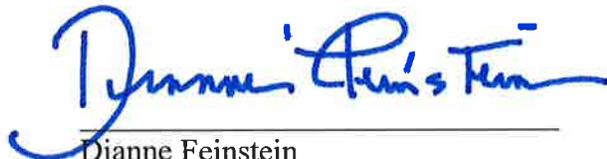
Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



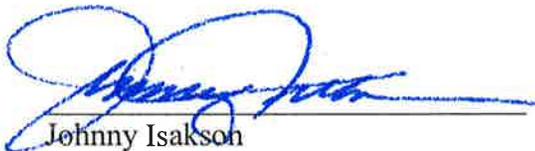
Dianne Feinstein
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Al Franken
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Johnny Isakson
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



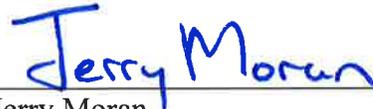
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Jerry Moran
United States Senator



Bill Nelson
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
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Tim Scott
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Jeanne Shaheen
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Debbie Stabenow
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Jon Tester
United States Senator



David Vitter
United States Senator



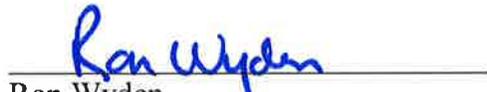
Mark Warner
United States Senator



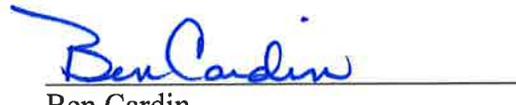
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Roger Wicker
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Ben Cardin
United States Senator