



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is the largest aviation organization in the world; a not-for-profit individual membership organization of more than 414,000 members nationwide, nearly three-quarters of the United States' pilots. Since 1939, AOPA has advocated on behalf of general aviation (GA) as a critical part of the U.S. transportation infrastructure and the economy as a whole.

General Aviation and the Economy

Each year, general aviation (all flying other than military and commercial) contributes more than \$150 billion to U.S. economic output, directly or indirectly, and employs nearly 1.3 million people whose collective annual earnings exceed \$53 billion. General aviation reaches thousands of local communities that are not served by commercial air service. In total, about 160 million passengers depend on general aviation for their air transportation needs every year.

Aviation Infrastructure Investment

As Congress continues to formulate an economic stimulus plan that may include state and local infrastructure investment, it is critical to include much-needed aviation infrastructure investment projects to improve the nation's vast network of public use airports that support both commercial and general aviation.

General aviation is an integral part of the national and state transportation system. There are over 5,200 public-use airports nationwide – including 127 public-use airports in the state of Florida. Since only 522 of the nation's airports are served by commercial airlines, the preservation and improvement of this vast airport network of general aviation airports is essential to the vitality of state and local economies. General aviation access serves as a boon to local businesses and economic development. New investment will improve the safety and efficiency of these airports, while creating numerous new construction jobs for workers across the state. The American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) calculates that an additional investment in airport infrastructure of \$1 billion would create approximately 35,000 jobs.

Airport improvement projects will be a critical component of state plans to utilize potential federal "use it, or lose it" stimulus infrastructure funding. The National League of Cities (NLC) President, Kathleen Novak, stated that, "funding for airports, highways, transit, trains, clean water, sewers, school facilities and housing creates jobs and enhances the safety and competitiveness of our nation." According to the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO), there are several "ready-to-go" aviation infrastructure projects in every state that could commence in an expeditious manner to provide an immediate boost to the economy.

If you have any questions regarding this important issue or if you need any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact AOPA's Vice President of Regional Affairs, Greg Pecoraro.