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March 8, 2013

The Honorable Jeff Barker, Chair
Committee On Judiciary
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative Barker:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), a not-for-profit membership organization, represents the general aviation interests of nearly 400,000 members nationwide, including nearly 6,000 in Oregon. On behalf of AOPA and our members, we write to express the general aviation community's strong support for House Bill 2016, or any other legislative vehicle, that would clarify the inclusion of aviation activities on the list of outdoor recreational activities in Oregon's recreational use statute (ORS 105.672).

Many states have a recreational use statute that provides a degree of liability protection for landowners who allow the public to recreate on their lands as long as no fee is charged. However in Oregon, owners of more than 326 private use airfields are not certain that the recreational use statute pertains to them, and as a result, many deny aviation access to their private airfields. If Oregon's recreational use statute is amended through this legislation to clearly state that aviation is included in the list of recreational activities, private use airfield owners are more likely to allow the aviation community to access to their property. Such access facilitates a broad range of activities such as camping, hiking and other outdoor recreation, which stimulates economic activity at no cost to the state. Additionally, aviation is an excellent, low-impact source of recreational access by individuals who by virtue of health, age, or disability would otherwise be unable to enjoy the state's outdoor activities. This legislation could broaden such access.

On behalf of AOPA and our members, we appreciate your support of House Bill 2016. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (301) 695-2094.

Sincerely,

David R. Ulane, A.A.E.
Northwest Mountain Regional Manager