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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3603

December 8, 2004

The Honorable Marion C. Blakey
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Blakey:

The City of Chicago's destruction of Merrill C. Meigs Field (Meigs) during a midnight raid in March 2003 was a disservice to general aviation (GA) and destroyed a valuable airport within our nation's air transportation system – a system Congress and the American taxpayers have invested billions to build. As you know, Meigs has become an important icon in the GA community and those of us within the GA community applaud FAA's efforts in holding the City of Chicago accountable for its actions.

I believe FAA's assessment that the City of Chicago's did not provide proper notification to the FAA before closing the airport is right on point. Also, the City also unlawfully used airport funds to render Meigs Field unusable. I understand that in a response dated December 3, 2004, the City denied the FAA's allegations.

I have been advised that in explaining their response, City of Chicago officials publicly admitted that \$2.8 million of O'Hare and Midway airport funds were used to destroy the "abandoned" airport. The City of Chicago's definition of abandoned property is alarming; it was clearly a stretch to classify Meigs as an abandoned airport. When the airport was bulldozed under the cover of darkness, 16 aircraft - some arriving just the day prior - were stranded at the popular airport.

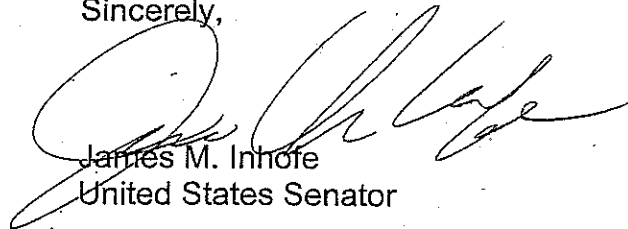
The destruction of Meigs Field was a complete abomination. Further insulting was the use of \$2.8 million of funds from O'Hare and Midway – two airports already strained with capacity issues and heavily supported with federal funding - in order to destroy a valuable general aviation airport.

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I strongly urge you to continue to pursue this matter and encourage the swift assessment of penalties to the maximum extent allowable by law. Kindly keep me informed of progress in your further investigation of this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly or Ruth Van Mark on my staff at (202) 224-8204 should I be able to assist you in any way.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James M. Inhofe", is written over the typed name and title.

James M. Inhofe
United States Senator

JMI/rvm