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October 31, 2013

Honorable Julia C. Allen, Mayor
Township of Readington
509 Route 523
Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889

Dear Mayor Allen:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the interests of nearly 400,000 members nationwide with 7,500 members in the State of New Jersey. AOPA is committed to ensuring that general aviation airports continue to play a vital role in our nation's and state's aviation transportation system. AOPA works to ensure that these airports continue to operate in a safe and efficient manner without undue threats and restrictions to their operations.

We are writing to express our strong opposition to ongoing efforts by the Township of Readington to strip ownership and development rights of the Solberg Airport (N51) from a family that has devoted over 3 generations to the safe operation of this important airport. We find it quite troubling that, in the face of continued losses in the state judicial system, the Township would continue to waste scarce taxpayer dollars in pursuing this agenda.

AOPA has followed this case since the beginning. It appears to us that each time the Township's argument for proceeding is defeated; another "reason" is pursued. In reading some of the latest stories, it seems to us that the latest strategy seems to be a claim that the Township wants to "prevent development by preserving the airport." Frankly, we find this statement as disingenuous at best. It is our opinion that is exactly what the Solberg family is attempting to do on their own without the use of taxpayer funds.

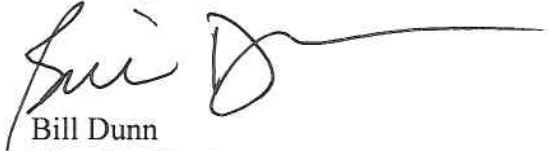
We believe the time has come for the Township to cease and desist in efforts to take the airport property from the Solberg family. If the town is indeed concerned with preserving the airport and protecting the airport from encroachment from non-conforming uses, then why not enter into an agreement with the family since it would appear that they have the same goals?

There is no doubt that both sides have spent tremendous and significant resources in this debate; funds which could have gone to significant improvements in the Town and airport. The difference is that the Solberg's have invested their own funds in protecting their livelihood and passion while the town has simply gone deep into taxpayers wallets to fund this initiative.

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Solberg Airport plays a vital role in a local, state and national transportation system. The owners are dedicated to continuing providing valuable services to the aviation system. We hope the Township recognizes the importance of this airport and will move quickly to dismiss legal actions against the airport.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Dunn", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bill Dunn
Vice President
Airports

cc: Honorable James Simpson, Commissioner of Transportation
Mr. Thomas S. Auriemma, Committee Member
Ms. Betty Ann Fort, Committee Member
Mr. Frank L. Gatti, Committee Member
Ms. Beatrice Muir, Committee Member