

AN OPEN LETTER

to

**CHICAGO MAYOR
RICHARD M. DALEY**

from

**PHIL BOYER,
PRESIDENT,
THE AIRCRAFT OWNERS
AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION**

regarding

**THE
DESTRUCTION
OF MEIGS FIELD.**

Mayor Daley:

WE PLAYED FAIR WITH YOU.

In December 2001, after a decade of lobbying, legislation, and legal action, you publicly agreed with the nation's pilots and their overwhelming opposition to the closing of Merrill C. Meigs Field by committing to keep the airport open for at least 25 years.

We believed you agreed with the 400,000 members of AOPA and the people of Chicago that Meigs Field provided a safe, easy route for small aircraft flying in and out of the Midwest.

We believed you understood that Meigs Field was an aviation icon recognized not only by pilots, but by enthusiasts worldwide who used it to learn how to "fly" on their computer flight simulators. We believed you knew not only the historical significance of this landmark but also its economic impact derived from tourism and business travel.

WE TOOK YOU AT YOUR WORD.

Last week, you opened fire on us by bulldozing the airport in the middle of the night. Not to protect the city from terrorist attacks.

No, Mr. Mayor, you wantonly destroyed Meigs Field under the cover of darkness because you knew that deception and lies could get you what free and open debate could not. And that you could get away with it.

I would say, "Shame!" But it is obvious that you have none.

NOW, THE TIME FOR PLAYING FAIR IS OVER.

The years of well-crafted arguments, painstaking research, and passionate but civil outcry from hundreds of thousands of pilots could not overcome the audacity of a mayor so bent on working his own agenda, that you would not let anything stand in the way of getting what you wanted. Including keeping your word and assuring the freedom of flight.

It is easy for us to wonder, as do many of your own supporters, how you could ever be trusted again. So, today, as president of AOPA, I'm giving you something you do not have the decency to give us: fair warning. We will use every legitimate tactic in the book to do whatever we have to do to restore Meigs Field to the service of general aviation.

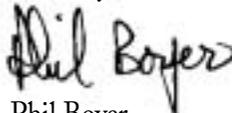
In light of your action, the AOPA has filed a formal complaint to the FAA citing violation of federal law (FAR Part 157) and is seeking an injunction to stop further destruction of the airport.

We are asking all AOPA members, many of whom own and manage businesses, to send an economic message by boycotting the City of Chicago in any way possible by holding meetings and conventions elsewhere and diverting commerce to other nearby cities.

Furthermore, we are demanding that O'Hare and Midway airports be deemed ineligible for further federal airport funding until Meigs Field has been re-opened.

You have seriously underestimated the resolve of America's pilots. In short, Mr. Mayor, we shall not allow you to clip our wings.

Sincerely,



Phil Boyer
President
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association

P.S. To learn more about how general aviation affects America's daily life, go to www.GAservingAmerica.org.



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION