



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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April 15, 2005

The Honorable Douglas S. Waldron
Members of the City Council
City of Manassas
9027 Center Street
Manassas, Virginia

Re: Proposed Increase in Aircraft Property Tax

Dear Mayor Waldron and Members of the City Council:

On behalf of the 403,000 members of the Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association, including nearly 11,000 in the Commonwealth of Virginia and most of the some 300 individuals who base their aircraft at the city-owned and operated Manassas Regional Airport, we strongly urge you to reject a proposed increase in the city's aircraft property tax.

We understand the City may be considering an increase of approximately 3000% in its tax rate for aircraft based at the airport. In our view, an overnight increase of this magnitude would single out aircraft for a tax rate increase unlike any other type of personal property has ever experienced.

More importantly, as you well recognize - and as your city's website proudly illustrates - the Manassas Regional Airport has become perhaps one of the community's most valuable economic assets. Increasing the existing tax rate by 3000% sends a negative message to the local pilots, the business community which has chosen to base planes at Manassas and to aviation users nationwide.

Since the Federal Aviation Administration has granted the airport significant amounts of federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding, we would urge the City to fully research the aircraft property tax in light of compliance with federal rules regarding the use of revenues collected at public use airports and compliance with sponsor assurances. Based on these questions, the city's cost of administration and most notably, the City of Manassas' dependence on a growing airport, we respectfully urge you to not change a formula that has proven so beneficial to your community.

Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact us if we can provide anything additional.

Sincerely,

Roger Cohen
Vice President
Regional Affairs