



**AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION**

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March 9, 2005

Honorable Dick Murphy  
Mayor  
City of San Diego  
202 C Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Mayor Murphy:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the interests of over 400,000 members nationwide including nearly 50,000 who are residents of the State of California. One of the Association's highest priorities is keeping airports and the vital air transportation connection and economic development they provide for communities viable and that the services provided to the public are adequate to meet the needs of not only the community, but of pilots and aircraft owners.

Our members have informed us that the City of San Diego has elected to allow the lease between the city and Gibbs Flying Service, a long-term tenant of San Diego's Montgomery Field (MYF), to expire without renewal at the end of May 2005. We also understand that the city will take over the operation of the leasehold when Gibbs vacates the property. Our principal concern is to ensure that our members receive the same quality services they have enjoyed over the years that Mr. Gibbs has always provided through the Gibbs Flying Service Fixed Base Operation (FBO) at the airport.

We know the city has budget constraints and pressure on the Airport Enterprise Account given recent litigation against the city. We can understand the city's desire to bolster the account's finances. However, operating an airport as the management organization and operating an FBO are two totally different worlds with little commonality outside of the fact that aircraft are involved.

Gibbs Flying Service has provided extensive flight instruction opportunities for our members as well as a place for flight instructors to conduct their business.

Gibbs is one of the most respected and long-lived flight schools in the San Diego area. While the National Air Transportation Association (NATA) provides representation and advocacy for business interests such as Gibbs, AOPA represents the interests of individuals, the consumer if you will, of the services provided by Gibbs. Therefore, we feel very strongly that it is imperative that, if the city does indeed assume daily operation of the leasehold, there should be the immediate establishment of a flight training facility to support our members' aviation needs.

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There was a time when newly hired airline pilots came from the ranks of the military. Such is no longer the case. Airline pilots of today are coming from general aviation airports much like Montgomery Field. With over 480 based single-engine aircraft and 277,000 annual operations, Montgomery Field is a vibrant thriving general aviation airport. Our members need continued, uninterrupted access to quality, skilled flight instruction like that provided by Gibbs. We encourage you to recognize this valuable service to the general aviation community and continue to provide these important services to based tenants and transient airport operators.

To ignore or side step these necessary services will surely have a detrimental impact on the airport's bottom-line.

We appreciate your considering our views on this matter and trust you will see the value of continuing to provide all those services currently available at Montgomery Field.

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: Federal Aviation Administration  
Airports District Office

P. Lamont Ewell  
City Manager  
City of San Diego

Members of the City Council