



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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October 20, 2005

Honorable John Liebert
Mayor
City of Blaine
344 "H" Street
Blaine, Washington 98230

Dear Mayor Liebert:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of more than 406,000 members, over two-thirds of the nation's pilots, with nearly 12,000 members in the State of Washington. On behalf of our membership, AOPA is committed to ensuring the future viability and development of general aviation airports and their facilities as part of a national transportation system.

The Blaine Municipal Airport (4W6) is an integral and vital part of the State of Washington's Airport System Plan as well as the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) National Plan for Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). Many airports throughout the United States and the State of Washington are not included in these aviation system plans. Therefore, inclusion in both of these documents shows very clearly the value of the Blaine Airport to not only your community, but to the nation's transportation infrastructure. **We understand that there is a proposal to "replace" the airport with a truck-stop, tavern and motel.**

We are extremely concerned that the city would even consider closing down this key airport nestled against the Canadian border. Over 75% of those who arrived at your airport last year were visitors to your area. And as visitors and tourists, they spent money in your community. According to the State of Washington, in the year 2000, the airport's economic impact on your community was nearly \$1 million. With the improvements to the airport currently being discussed as part of the airports new master plan, this economic impact could skyrocket.

Would council place a ballot measure for voter approval calling for the closure of an exit ramp from Interstate Highway 5 into your community? Of course not, but remember that an airport is just like an interstate highway. It is a community's "exit ramp" from a national aviation system and every bit as important. A mile of highway takes you one mile but a mile of runway takes you anywhere in the world.

Honorable John Liebert
Page 2
October 20, 2005

We are also concerned that your constituents may be confused, or worse yet, misled by the West Blaine Business Association (WBBA) in what the closure of Blaine Municipal Airport would mean to them.

For example, a flyer being distributed by WBBA leads those reading it to believe that closing the airport means lower noise pollution and a safer community. WBBA leadership made that announcement at the October 6th Semiahmoo Men's Breakfast that the best use of the airport property would be for a truck-stop, tavern and motel.

AOPA believes the Blaine Municipal Airport is critical to the community. We hope you would agree that the proposed "alternative" uses of the airport are surely not in the best interest of your small community? A truck stop definitely won't be quieter than your municipal airport. It might be a good idea to ask yourself who stands to benefit from these "alternative" uses. It most likely will not be the majority of your constituents.

We hope the council recognizes the value of the city's airport. We urge you to support the airport and proceed with development that will bring additional tourism and economic prosperity to your city.

Sincerely,



Bill Dunn
Vice President
Airports

cc: Mayor Pro-Tem Ken Ely
Councilmember Bonnie Onyon
Councilmember Bruce Wolf
Councilmember Bob Brunkow
Councilmember Richard Myers
Councilmember Marsha Hawkins
Mr. Wade Bryant, Manager, FAA Seattle Airports District Office
Mr. John Siebold, Director, Aviation Division, WA Department of Transportation