



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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September 20, 2005

Honorable Terry Everman, Chairman
Michigan Aeronautics Commission
2700 E Airport Service Drive
Lansing, MI 48906

Dear Chairman Everman:

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 over 12,600 members in the State of Michigan. 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.

We are writing to express our deep disappointment in the lack of action by the Michigan Aeronautics Commission in resolving a critical issue at the Grosse Ile Municipal Airport (ONZ). The matter of obstruction (trees) removal, which continues to impact the utility of the runway at the airport, was scheduled on the Commission's agenda for the September 14, 2005 meeting. The agenda item, (II - Commission Business at item C – Declaration of Hazard – Grosse Ile Municipal Airport), was removed without reason in spite of objections by Commissioner Kraft.

Director Abent and his staff have been working to resolve the tree obstruction issue for an extremely protracted period of time – years! The Township of Grosse Ile's, the airport sponsor, resolution is to continue to shorten the useable runway length: simply an unacceptable solution to users of the airport. In fact, due to these runway obstructions, the airport currently operates under a "provisional license" issued by the state. This license expires at the end of September 2005, so resolving this issue is critically time sensitive.

The Township of Grosse Isle has been provided with more than an adequate amount of time to implement tree trimming on the adjacent property and resolve this airport safety issue. Therefore, we feel that it is imperative for the State of Michigan through the Michigan Aeronautics Commission, to act expeditiously and decisively to issue a Determination of Hazard under MCL259.152 and force the immediate trimming of trees through legal action if necessary, to remove these obstructions as provided by Michigan law.

We are hopeful the Commission will exercise a leadership role in resolving this issue rather than allowing a repeat of the unfortunate events that began in 1986 and finally ended in 2004 at Wilderness Airpark Airport (24M) that required legal action by private parties to enforce this Michigan law on obstructions and hazards to airports.

Honorable Terry Everman

Page 2

September 20, 2005

Should you wish to discuss this issue with me further, please contact me by phone at 301-695-2205 or by e-mail at bill.dunn@aopa.org.

We appreciate your immediate attention to this most pressing matter.

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: Mr. Rob Abent, Director
Multi-Modal Transportation Services Bureau
Michigan Department of Transportation