



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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February 17, 2006

Honorable John Cauthorn
Chairman
Senate Governmental Accountability & Fiscal Oversight Committee
State Capitol Building, Room 416
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Re: **Opposition to SB 917 (Transfer of state fund balances and future revenues to general fund)**

Dear Chairman Cauthorn:

On behalf of the more than 7,000 Missouri members – of more than 407,000 nationwide – of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), we are writing to express our strong opposition to Senate Bill 917, which transfers the balances and future revenues of certain state funds, including the state aviation trust fund, to the state general revenue fund.

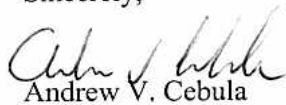
While AOPA understands the fiscal challenges facing Missouri, we cannot stress enough the necessity of properly funding aviation. Missouri's general aviation (GA) airports are a fundamental component of the national transportation system. General aviation is a catalyst for economic growth. It is an integral part of the U.S. economy, generates millions of jobs, and represents 1 percent of the GDP. Businesses that use GA gain competitive advantage, while communities gain jobs and access to the nation's air transportation system.

These local community airports work just like an on-ramp to the Interstate Highway System. Many GA flights go between small community airports, and some are used to take people to large airports where they can board flights with one of the airlines. Funding these GA airports directly supports the goal of moving people and goods more efficiently and enhancing Missouri's economic competitiveness. Eliminating this funding would directly undermine the state's economy by stalling this economic engine.

We should also make you aware that in 2004 the Kentucky Legislature attempted to pass similar legislation, and was notified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that diversion of tax revenue from aviation sources at federally obligated airports for non-airport purposes is "generally contrary to federal law." Kentucky lawmakers wisely backed away from that proposal, and we strongly urge your committee to reject SB 917.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions, or should you require any further information, please contact AOPA's Midwest Regional Representative, Bob Dickens, at (417) 890-1504.

Sincerely,



Andrew V. Cebula

Executive Vice President, Government Affairs

cc: Senator Chuck Gross, Sponsor, SB 917
Senate Pro Tem Mike Gibbons, Co-sponsor, SB 917
Joe Pestka, Administer of Aviation, Department of Transportation
Bob Dickens, AOPA Midwest Regional Representative