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Testimony of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Opposing Sections 21 – 25, 28, 29 of Senate Bill 1453

Dear Chairman Rodrigues and members of the Committee,

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is the world's largest aviation organization, representing the general aviation interests of pilots and aircraft owners, including more than 6,000 of our members in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. On behalf of those members, we oppose Senate Bill 1453, Sections 21 – 25, 28 & 29.

Massachusetts sets the standard for success in the general aviation industry in New England, with 39 public use airports contributing more than 162,000 jobs; providing \$6.1 Billion in annual payroll and producing a total economic impact of more than \$16 Billion annually according to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. Services such as medical transport, law enforcement, wildlife management, search & rescue, and flight training operations that comprise much of the general aviation activity directly contribute to the quality of life of residents in the state.

A major factor in Massachusetts' success was a regulatory climate that provided a distinct competitive advantage compared to neighboring states. In 2002 the legislature established the sales tax exemption on aircraft, aircraft maintenance and storage of aircraft. This upfront savings led to a booming aviation maintenance sector and an increase in Massachusetts based aircraft that now generate local and state revenues of more than \$800 million annually.

General Aviation is, of course, a mobile industry. Although convenience is a chief concern for aircraft owners, expense is the principle motivator in the decision on where to base an aircraft—particularly when multiple geographically close options are available, (i.e. Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York and Rhode Island). Those States that experience the broadest range of industry growth employ a comprehensive aviation incentive plan extending to both aircraft and maintenance. This combination attracts the greatest number of aircraft, directly supporting aviation jobs and the airports that rely on them. For these reasons, we oppose associated sections (Sec. 21 – 25, 28 & 29) of Senate Bill 1453.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue. As a representative of the world's largest aviation organization, member of the New Bedford Regional Airport Commission, and resident of Westport, MA, please consider me a resource on general aviation. I look forward to continue working with this Committee to both develop and protect this important transportation asset.

Sincerely,

Sean M. Collins