

# EXECUTIVE ALERT



| By Phil Boyer |

## Warning! For the CEO whose company uses private aircraft

If you are a CEO like me, it's possible you passed right over the article in the July/August 2006 issue of this magazine: "Solving Airspace Gridlock." Notwithstanding the misinformation about the condition of our nation's airspace and airport system put forth by the author, it does point to a very important issue that could affect you, your company and your employees who use general aviation aircraft, in addition to heavy use of the airlines. Next year, Congress must pass legislation that governs the way our nation funds the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and its operation of the air traffic control (ATC) system and our airports. For nearly half a century we have relied upon a combination of taxes on aviation users and revenues from the nation's taxpayers to support this system similar to the way we fund the highway system.

Both the FAA and the airlines would like to change these time-tested, efficient funding formulas and place a greater financial burden on non-airline operations; or in basic terms pass along their costs to corporate aviation. Robert Poole, the author of "Solving Airspace Gridlock," represents the "privatization-happy" Reason Foundation. To make his point he distorts the fact that the United States operates the

largest, most efficient and safest air transportation system in the world. At any hour of the day, half of all the world's air traffic is flying in U.S. airspace. Contrary to Poole's assertion, it is also a system that works: A combination of 31 major hub airports that handle 70% of all airline passengers and 5,400 community airports that allow companies like

yours to use smaller and more efficient general aviation aircraft to transport goods, personnel and services to the rest of the country. You may have very well located a manufacturing plant or other facility in a community because of its local general aviation airport.

Just as the American economy thrives on a vibrant and growing interstate highway system for cars, trucks and buses, our nation's airspace and airport system provide those same benefits. But our national air transportation system is in jeopardy because the airlines and FAA are looking at ways to charge smaller planes by flight, weight, distance, size of airport used and a variety of other schemes – all

designed to lower their costs and allow the airlines to take control of the air traffic system away from Congress. The thought of airlines being in charge of our nation's aviation infrastructure — when they have enough trouble running their own businesses — is frightening!

Whether you own one airplane or your company has a fleet of airplanes;

---

**The thought of airlines being in charge of our nation's aviation infrastructure — when they have enough trouble running their own businesses — is frightening!**

---

if you are a pilot or your Board of Directors approves your corporate flight department budget, you have a stake in whatever legislation develops next year. Don't buy the rhetoric of those who would turn over our nation's aviation dominance from government control to the highest private bidder. This is a great opportunity to explain to your newly-elected members of Congress why you and your company value the transportation provided by private aircraft.

*Phil Boyer is President of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association ([www.aopa.org](http://www.aopa.org)). AOPA represents more than 408,000 members in the United States, providing information, education and advocacy*



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

[www.aopa.org](http://www.aopa.org)