

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 11, 2013

The Honorable Ray LaHood  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Michael Huerta  
Administrator  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Secretary LaHood and Administrator Huerta:

We are writing to communicate our concern and confusion as to the nature of a recent report on actions to be taken by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to close 238 air traffic control towers across the country, including 189 towers included in the Contract Tower Program.

Given the nature of our fiscal environment, and the recent enactment of sequestration that resulted from the Budget Control Act (BCA), we are aware that all agencies are required to comply with a 5% across the board cut to all discretionary programs. Additionally, we recognize the burden this places on the Department of Transportation (DOT) as well as the FAA to implement these mandatory cuts.

However, our concern and confusion arises from the decision to apply a 75% cut to the Contract Tower Program instead of applying a uniform, across-the-board 5% cut to all FAA programs as outlined in the BCA. A 75% cut such as this is highly disproportionate to what is authorized under sequestration and borders on reckless behavior when one considers the national importance contract towers play in aviation safety. The DOT inspector General has repeatedly stated the Contract Tower Program is a highly cost-effective program and represents a responsible use of tax payer dollars.

We have several questions we hope you may be able to answer for us to help us understand FAA's pending actions.

1. We would like to know under where in the BCA you believe FAA is authorized to apply such a disproportionate cut to the Contract Tower Program?
2. Why was the Contract Tower Program targeted with such a large cut and not another program which does not directly impact public safety?
3. What process or procedure was undertaken to arrive at this decision to apply larger cuts to the Contract Tower Program.

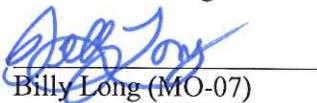
It is our hope that you can provide us with answers to these questions as quickly as possible. With the upcoming fiscal year 2014 Appropriations process quickly approaching, answers to these questions will give us a better understanding of how to provide FAA with more structured guidance on the use of their appropriated funds for this coming fiscal year and future fiscal years going forward.

We would like to again express our dissatisfaction with these proposed cuts and hope you reconsider this unbalanced approach to implementing the federally mandated sequester. We look forward to hearing your responses and appreciate your consideration of our concerns.

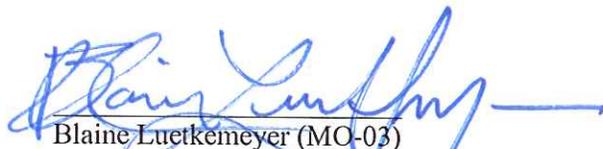
Sincerely,



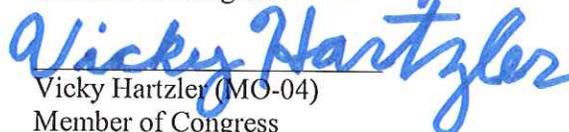
Sam Graves (MO-06)  
Member of Congress



Billy Long (MO-07)  
Member of Congress



Blaine Luetkemeyer (MO-03)  
Member of Congress



Vicky Hartzler (MO-04)  
Member of Congress