



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Washington, DC 20515

Don Young
Chairman

James L. Oberstar
Ranking Democratic Member

May 4, 2006

Lloyd A. Jones, Chief of Staff
Elizabeth Megginson, Chief Counsel

David Heymsfeld, Democratic Chief of Staff

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H218 Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David R. Obey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Knollenberg
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury,
HUD, The Judiciary, District of Columbia,
and Independent Agencies
2358 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John W. Olver
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury,
HUD, The Judiciary, District of Columbia,
and Independent Agencies
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Lewis, Ranking Member Obey, Chairman Knollenberg, and Ranking Member Olver:

Since 1982, the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant program has been a major component of airport planning and capital funding for critical safety and capacity projects such as runway, apron, and taxiway construction and rehabilitation. In fact, for smaller airports, AIP is the primary source of capital funding.

A few weeks ago, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) forecast that airlines are expected to carry more than 1 billion passengers by 2015, increasing from approximately 740 million in 2005. The FAA estimates that \$39.5 billion of AIP-eligible infrastructure development will be needed between 2005 and 2009. Airports Council International-North America's (ACI-NA) most recent Capital Needs Survey estimates that airport capital development costs for AIP-eligible and other necessary projects will total more than \$71.5 billion during the same time frame.

Clearly, we must make robust investments in our airport infrastructure today to meet anticipated future demands. Regrettably, the Bush Administration's FY2007 budget request is short-sighted, providing just \$2.75 billion for AIP – \$950 million less than the \$3.7 billion authorized by VISION 100 for FY2007 and \$800 million less than the \$3.55 billion provided in FY2006. While the Administration's budget states that "[t]he proposed funding level for AIP grants is robust by historical standards," actually, funding for AIP has well exceeded \$3 billion a year for the past six years.

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In addition, the Administration's proposed cut triggers several significant changes in the AIP entitlement formula funding:

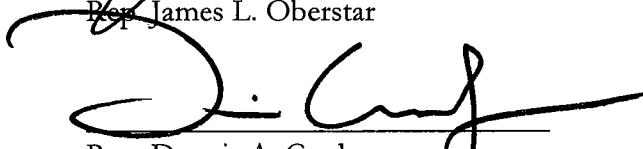
- The minimum entitlement for primary airports (i.e., airports that have more than 10,000 passenger boardings per year) will be reduced from \$1 million to \$650,000.
- The entitlements for larger primary airports will be cut by one-half.
- The entitlements for more than 2,500 general aviation airports – which is as much as \$150,000 per airport – will be eliminated.

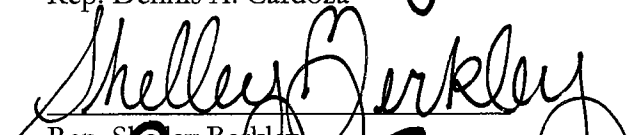
When the Administration's FY2007 request is compared with the FY2007 authorized level of funding, virtually every airport that currently receives AIP entitlement funding will have its entitlement reduced; virtually every state will receive less total AIP entitlement funding; and discretionary AIP funds will cut by almost \$118 million.

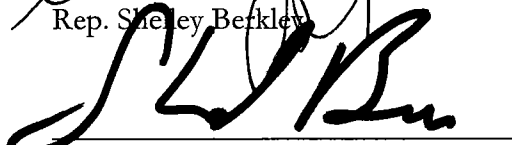
For these reasons, we respectfully request in drafting the FY2007 House Transportation-Treasury Appropriations bill that you reject the Administration's proposal and provide the fully authorized \$3.7 billion level of funding for the AIP program.

Sincerely,


Rep. James L. Oberstar

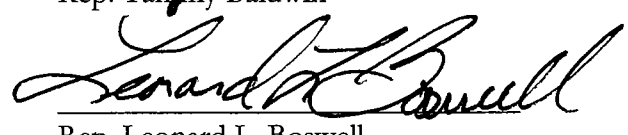

Rep. Dennis A. Cardoza

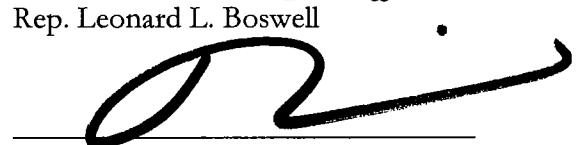

Rep. Shelley Berkley


Rep. Sherrod Brown

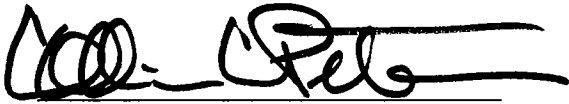

Rep. Jerry F. Costello


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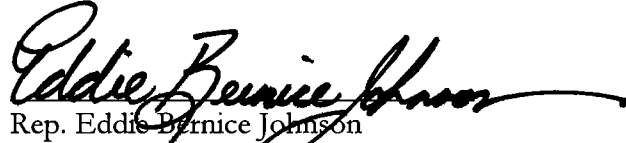

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Rep. Anthony D. Weiner

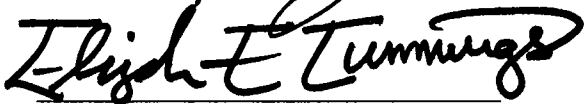
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Rep. Collin Peterson



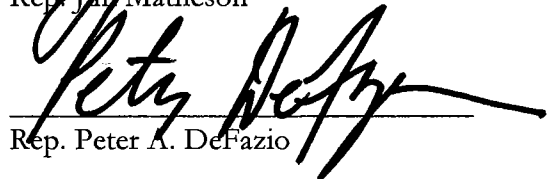
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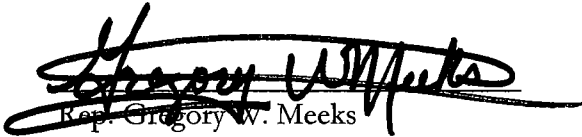
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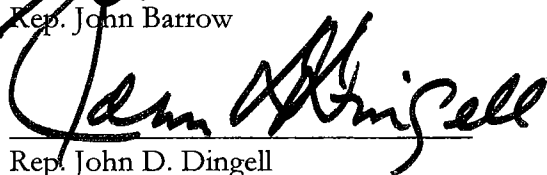
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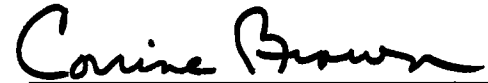
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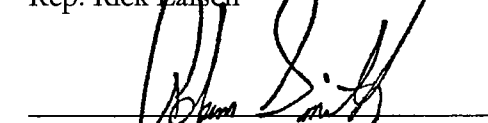
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Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton



Rep. Rick Larsen



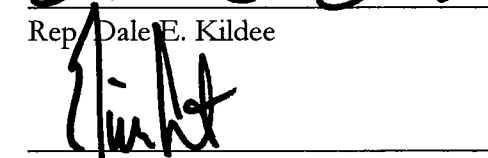
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Rep. Nick J. Rahall, II



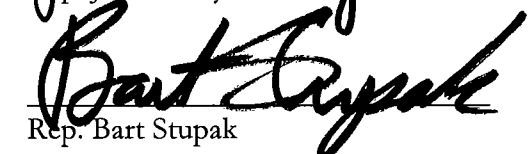
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Rep. Jim Costa

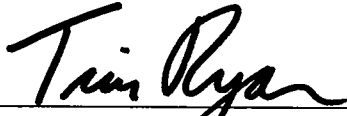


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Rep. John Lewis



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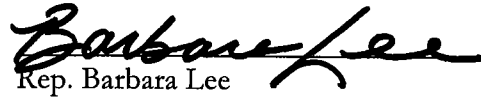
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Rep. Lois Capps



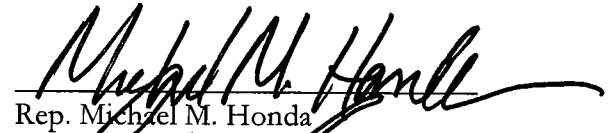
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Rep. Russ Carnahan



Rep. Michael M. Honda

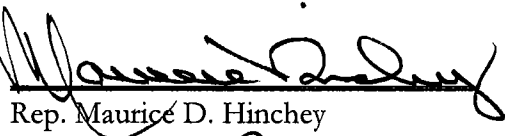


Rep. Gary Ackerman



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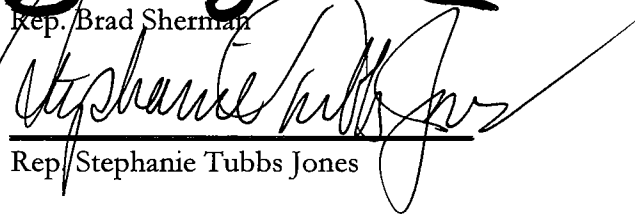
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Rep. Ed Pastor



Rep. Brad Sherman



Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones



Rep. Neil Abercrombie



Rep. Jim Davis



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