

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 20, 2013

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

RE: DOT/FAA Announcement to Close ATC Contract Towers

Dear Administrator Huerta:

We are writing to express our concern regarding the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) announcement to close a number of contract air traffic control (ATC) towers due to the federal budget sequestration. As you probably know, six of those towers service Massachusetts airports; Norwood, New Bedford, Lawrence, Beverly, Worcester and Westfield-Barnes.

These regional airports and their ATC towers are key elements in the national air transportation system and critical to our national security. Closing the ATC towers will jeopardize the safety of the flying public as well as that of residents within a certain proximity to these airports, have a negative impact on regional economies and threaten our military readiness.

The six airports in Massachusetts accommodate a significant mix of commercial, medical, private and military aircraft and flight services; three of the six reside within the Class B controlled airspace of Logan International Airport and serve as critical reliever-category airports. The ATC tower operations allow for safe arrivals and departures, prevent mid-air collisions, and maintain the safety and efficiency of our national airspace system through critical flight training programs. Combined, the six towers manage hundreds of thousands of operations annually.

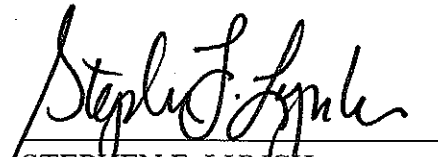
The FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board place high importance on implementing Safety Management Systems (SMS). We believe that cutting the Federal Contract Tower program and closing these ATC towers is contrary to a safety-first approach.

In addition, over the past three decades, the Federal Contract Tower program has represented one of the agency's most cost-effective safety initiatives. Quite frankly, this decision by the FAA appears to make neither fiscal nor operational sense.


We agree on the need to identify means through which to improve our current fiscal situation. But any such effort should not jeopardize the safety, security and economic well-being of our citizens. These six ATC towers and others around the country are critical to the continued successful operation of their respective airports and to the regions they serve, and vital to our national interests. The Federal Contract Tower program's cost effectiveness and flight safety enhancements are a proven success. At the very least a safety risk assessment should be conducted at each individual facility prior to any final decision regarding ATC tower closings.


We strongly urge you to carefully consider the critical importance of the Federal Contract Tower program before taking final action on closing any air traffic control towers.

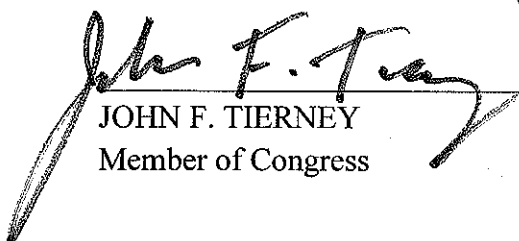
Sincerely,


  
STEPHEN F. LYNCH  
Member of Congress

  
EDWARD J. MARKEY  
Member of Congress

  
RICHARD E. NEAL  
Member of Congress

  
JAMES P. McGOVERN  
Member of Congress

  
JOHN F. TIERNEY  
Member of Congress

  
MICHAEL E. CAPUANO  
Member of Congress



NIKI TSONGAS  
Member of Congress



WILLIAM R. KEATING  
Member of Congress



JOSEPH P. KENNEDY III  
Member of Congress



ELIZABETH WARREN  
United States Senator



WILLIAM M. COWAN  
United States Senator