March 10, 2015

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
440 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart:

On behalf of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, Experimental Aircraft Association, General Aviation Manufacturers Association, Helicopter Association International, National Agricultural Aviation Association, National Air Transportation Association, and National Business Aviation Association, we write to thank you for your past support of the collaborative government and industry initiative to develop and deploy an unleaded avgas replacement for the current 100 octane low lead fuel. As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations legislation, we respectfully request that you support the FAA’s FY 2016 budget request of $6,000,000 for NextGen – Alternative Fuels for General Aviation (GA).

The purpose of this endeavor is to address the complex transition of the existing GA piston fleet, comprised of more than 200,000 aircraft, to an unleaded fuel. The support of your Subcommittee to this program in previous years has been used to further this effort through research and to launch the Piston Aviation Fuels Initiative (PAFI), a robust program of testing and evaluations to identify suitable fuel replacements. Investment in this program this year and continuing through FY 2018 is essential to ensuring that the transition effectively balances environmental improvement with aviation safety, technical challenges, and economic impact.

Today, four candidate fuels are being evaluated through qualification and properties testing and PAFI is diligently analyzing potentially viable fuel(s) that will move on to full scale engine and aircraft field testing. Funding the program at the Administration’s FY 2016 budget request will continue this progress and enable FAA to continue to conduct safety assessments and performance tests of candidate fuels, conduct comparison of fuel material compatibility with key airplane and fuel system components, and provide toxicological evaluation in order to identify the most viable replacement. The goal of this PAFI work is to identify and achieve the necessary FAA approvals and authorizations to enable the vast majority of the piston fleet of aircraft to operate on an unleaded fuel.

On behalf of the aforementioned organizations, which represent operators that utilize piston aircraft as well as those that manufacture, service, and maintain them, we look forward to working with you to facilitate this initiative. Thank you for your time, consideration, and past support which is critical to the safety and economic sustainability of the general aviation community.
Sincerely,

Mark R. Baker  
President and CEO  
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association  
AOPA

Jack Pelton  
Chairman of the Board  
Experimental Aircraft Association  
EAA

Peter J. Bunce  
President and CEO  
General Aviation Manufacturers Association  
GAMA

Matthew S. Zuccaro  
President and CEO  
Helicopter Association International  
HAI

Andrew D. Moore  
President and CEO  
National Agricultural Aviation Association  
NAAA

Thomas L. Hendricks  
President and CEO  
National Air Transportation Association  
NATA

Ed Bolen  
President and CEO  
National Business Aviation Association  
NBAA