



May 23, 2012

Senator Carl Levin
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator John McCain
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Levin and Ranking Member McCain,

As associations representing all segments of the aviation community, we write to express our strong support for initiatives by the Department of Defense (DOD) to research, test and deploy biofuels in the aviation sector. Such efforts to develop alternative energy sources to foreign oil are critical to ensuring that our country can become more energy independent while helping protect against high costs and volatility in this market.

It is our collective belief that the ongoing efforts of the United States military on alternative fuels are helping reduce the cost of those alternatives and will ultimately help reduce our reliance on foreign oil. The biofuels industry is rapidly developing and has the potential to save taxpayers millions as well as provide a much-needed, supply-based hedge against the volatility resulting from reliance on unstable sources of oil. DOD's work is being leveraged to move more quickly toward commercial viability of alternatives by demonstrating large scale production as well as making the price more competitive. For these reasons, we are concerned that language included in the House of Representatives DOD Authorization bill prescribing a price for purchase of alternative fuels could thwart achieving our nation's energy independence and security goals.

In addition to helping address our nation's energy challenges, DOD's work on alternative fuels will help meet our nation's environmental challenges as well. While aviation operators have the strong incentive of the high cost of fuel to be extremely fuel efficient, they are part of a worldwide aviation coalition that has proposed a "global sectoral approach" to further address aviation carbon emissions through an aggressive set of measures and targets. These targets include an annual average fuel-efficiency improvement of 1.5 percent through 2020 and carbon-neutral growth from 2020, subject to critical government infrastructure and technology investments such as air traffic control modernization, with an aspirational goal of a 50 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 relative to 2005 levels. Our plan is to achieve these goals through new aircraft technology, sustainable alternative aviation fuels and air traffic management and infrastructure improvements. Each of these pillars is vital, but the contribution of alternative fuels could in fact be a "game changer."

We believe the ongoing military and civil aviation efforts must be continued and we strongly advocate that you prioritize and fund investment in aviation biofuels in what we all acknowledge is a difficult fiscal environment. Ultimately, we are convinced that this is an investment that will pay off by saving taxpayers millions through achieving energy security and independence.

Thank you for your leadership and we will look forward to working with you on this issue that is vital to our nation's aviation and manufacturing sector.

Sincerely,

Aerospace Industries Association
Air Line Pilots Association
Airlines for America
Airports Council International – North America
American Association of Airport Executives
Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International
Cargo Airline Association

General Aviation Manufacturers Association
International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers
National Air Carrier Association
National Air Transportation Association
National Business Aviation Association
Regional Airline Association

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Armed Services