

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

Washington, DC 20515  
July 31, 2014

The Honorable Michael Huerta  
Administrator  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta:

We are writing to inquire about the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) long term strategy and plan for the Federal Contract Tower Program (FCTP).

As you know the FCTP has been in place for over 30 years and has exemplified how the private sector and Federal government can form and implement a working partnership aimed at improving air traffic safety. Currently, 252 airports and their surrounding communities around the nation participate in this program that has, without question, enhanced safety and improved air traffic control services in a cost-effective manner to the FAA and the American taxpayer as validated numerous times by the Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General.

Federal contract towers supplement FAA staffed facilities around the country, buttressing a unified national air traffic control system. In addition, contract towers play a vital role in connecting smaller airports and rural communities with the national air transportation system.

We recognize the FAA—like all Federal agencies – has had to deal with recent discretionary budgetary constraints. However, this aviation safety program handles approximately 28% of all U.S. tower operations, but accounts for only 14% of the budget allocation for FAA's air traffic control tower operations. This Congress, as well as past ones, has clearly demonstrated in a bi-partisan and bi-cameral fashion that there is merit and need for the FCTP.

We are aware that the FAA has initiated a planning effort aimed at "rightsizing the NAS" under the direction of Deputy Administrator Michael Whitaker as well as the formation of a low activity tower working group. It is not clear if, or how, these two efforts are related. The initiative to "rightsize the NAS" has been mentioned in testimony before Congress, in numerous speeches by FAA executives, and FAA documents. Despite these public references to this initiative, few details are known other than a vague statement to match the FAA services and its facilities with the demand from aviation stakeholders. We believe it is critically important that FAA work collaboratively and in partnership with the key aviation stakeholders before making important policy decisions that impact the long term sustainability of contract towers nationwide.

Therefore, we would like you to address some questions we have in a specific and transparent format:

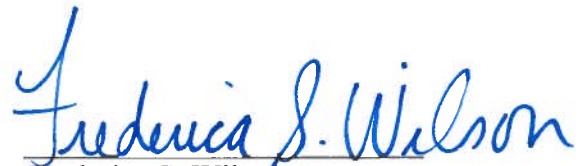
- What is FAA's long term strategy and plan for the FCTP?
- In addition, how does the FCTP factor in to "Rightsizing the National Airspace System"?
- How does the FCTP factor into the Low Activity Tower Working Group, recently formed by the FAA from our understanding, within FAA's Air Traffic Organization?

Thank you for your time and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Bob Goodlatte  
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



Steve Scalise  
Member of Congress



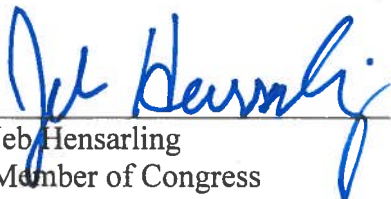
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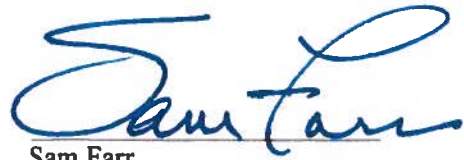
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Raúl M. Grijalva  
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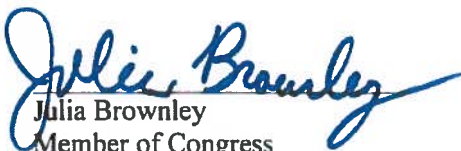
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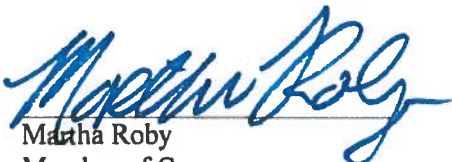
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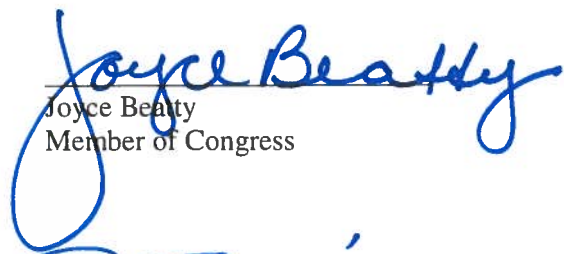
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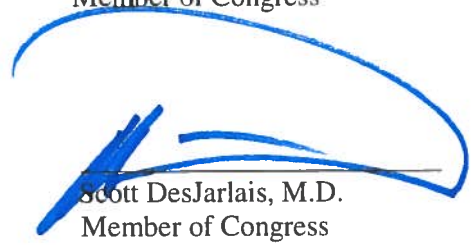
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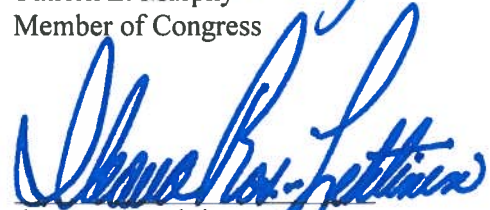


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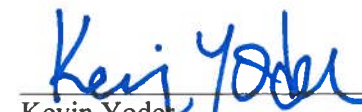
  
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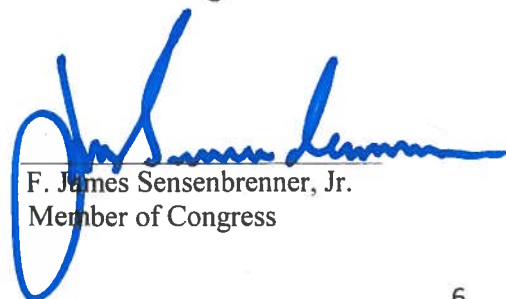
  
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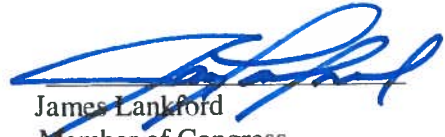
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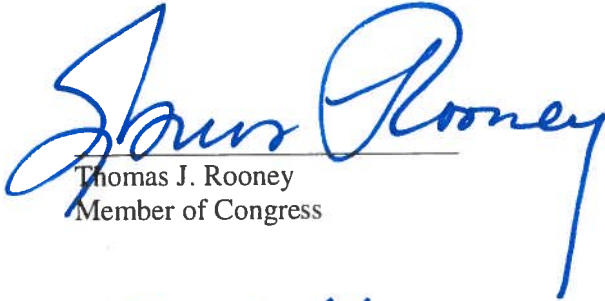
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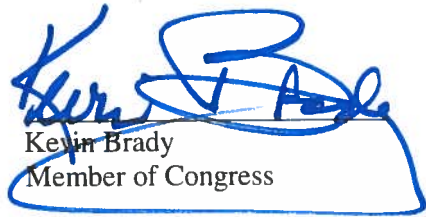
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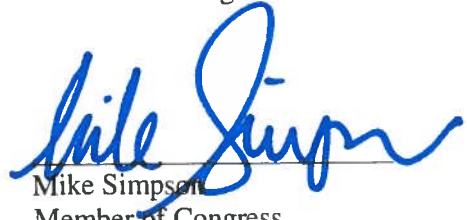
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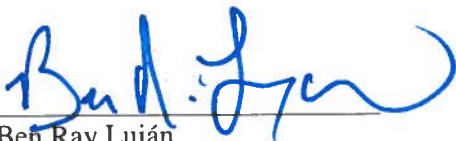
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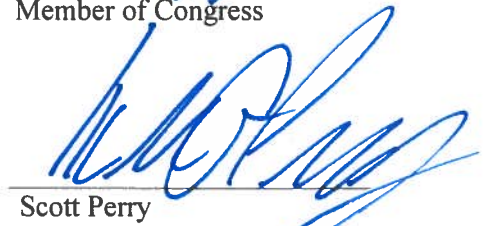
  
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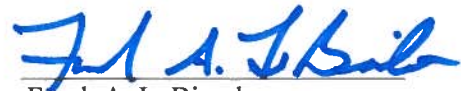
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