

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 19, 2018

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Housing and Urban Development,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Housing and Urban Development,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2019 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to include language ensuring full and dedicated funding for the Contract Tower Program as part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 budget for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Full and dedicated funding for the Contract Tower Program is critical to ensuring that operations continue through FY 2019 at the 254 Federal Aviation Administration contract towers across the country. Restricting or reducing the operations of contract towers would have a substantial, negative impact on general aviation safety, the efficiency of large commercial airports, disaster relief and emergency medical operations, law enforcement, agriculture activities and businesses throughout the United States. In addition, many contract tower airports are located near or adjacent to military bases and manage a substantial number of military-related and national security operations, directly supporting the readiness and training of military units. In 2016, 47 percent of all military traffic at civilian airports was handled by a federal contract tower.

The contract tower program is one of the FAA's most cost-effective programs. Contract towers handle approximately 28 percent of the nation's air traffic control tower operations, yet they account for only 14 percent of the FAA's total tower operations budget. Additionally, the average contract tower operates at one-third the cost of a federal control tower, though it is held to the same standard of excellence.

Providing full and dedicated funding language for the Contract Tower Program is necessary to ensure FAA appropriately funds the program as it manages the budgetary constraints of the coming fiscal year. It will provide certainty to local communities and protect this important and long-standing aviation safety program from being targeted for disproportionate cuts or elimination of service at certain airports.

As Congress has done in past fiscal years, we urge you to include full and dedicated funding for the Contract Tower Program in the Fiscal Year 2019 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Contract towers have played a central role in managing the safety and efficiency of our nation's complex airspace for over three decades, and we look forward to working with you to preserve and promote their future success.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Roy Blunt  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



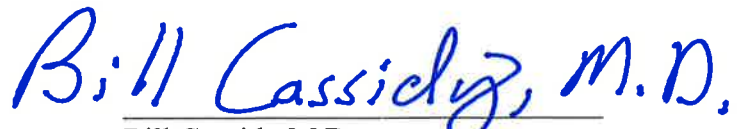
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United States Senator



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United States Senator



Bill Cassidy M.D.  
United States Senator



John Cornyn  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
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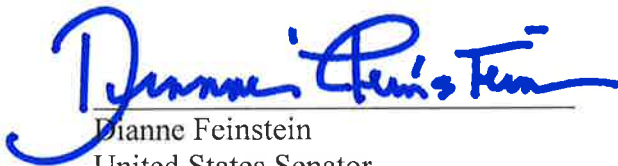
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Cory Gardner  
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Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Heidi Heitkamp  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



John Hoeven  
United States Senator



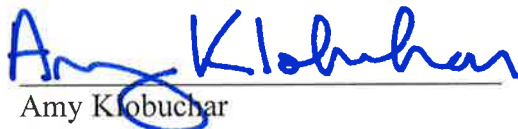
Johnny Isakson  
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Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



John Kennedy  
United States Senator



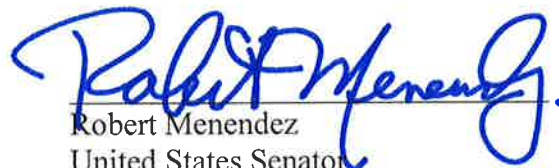
Amy Klobuchar  
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Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



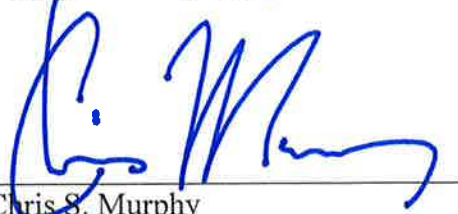
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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
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United States Senator

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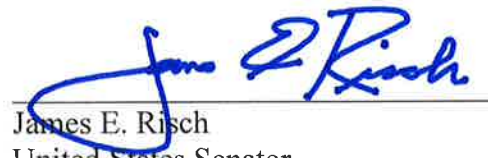
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Bill Nelson  
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



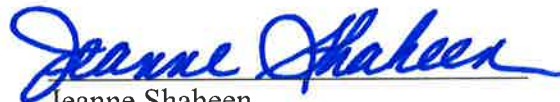
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Tina Smith  
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Debbie Stabenow  
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Jon Tester  
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Tom Udall  
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Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



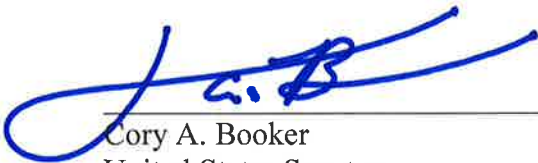
Elizabeth Warren  
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Roger F. Wicker  
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Ron Wyden  
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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator