

February 24, 2016

The Honorable Susan Collins
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Collins:

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 Association of State Aviation Officials, we write to thank you for your past support of the collaborative government and industry initiative to identify and deploy a safe unleaded replacement for the current 100 octane low lead fuel used in piston engine aircraft. As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations legislation, we respectfully request that you provide \$7,000,000 in funding for the FAA's NextGen – Alternative Fuels for General Aviation (GA) program.

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 a replacement unleaded fuel. The support of your Subcommittee to this effort in previous years has been used to further the research necessary to launch and conduct the Piston Aviation Fuels Initiative (PAFI), a robust program of testing and evaluation to identify suitable unleaded fuel replacements with the least impact on the existing fleet of GA aircraft. Investment in this program this year and continuing through FY 2018 is essential to ensuring that the transition to an unleaded replacement fuel effectively balances environmental improvement with aviation safety, technical challenges, and economic impact to the U.S. general aviation transportation system.

Significant progress has been made. Seventeen unleaded fuel formulations were submitted by producers to the FAA/industry PAFI program. FAA selected four potentially viable candidate fuels and in December 2015 completed evaluation through extensive laboratory and rig testing to ensure the fuel properties and safety qualification necessary for use in aircraft. This included safety performance assessments, materials compatibility with key airplane and fuel system materials and components, and toxicological evaluation. An independent FAA technical evaluation committee is currently analyzing the results and in March 2016 will select the two most viable unleaded fuels that will move on to full scale engine and aircraft field testing.

Funding this program at \$7,000,000 will continue this progress and ensure that PAFI will be able to conduct the number of full scale engine and aircraft flight testing necessary to achieve the required FAA approvals and authorizations to enable the vast majority of the 200,000 piston aircraft in the U.S. to operate on an unleaded fuel. While this amount is larger than the President's FY17 budget request, it is consistent with the levels provided by Congress in FY16

and would allow for the full scale engine/aircraft testing necessary given the findings of initial research conducted on the candidate fuels.

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,



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