Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 11, 2013

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Michael P. Huerta
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW #1010
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Secretary LaHood and Administrator Huerta:

We are profoundly disappointed with the decision of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to target 149 FAA contract control towers for closure on June 15. We ask that you identify lower priority spending elsewhere in the FAA's budget for reduction.

As you are well aware, contract towers have long played an integral role in the agency's efforts to manage the safety and efficiency of the nation's complex airspace. The decision to shutter contract towers on such a wide-scale basis is unprecedented.

Despite the serious concerns expressed by elected representatives in the House and Senate on a bipartisan basis, as well as by local officials, business leaders, airports, air traffic controllers, general aviation operators and businesses, state aviation officials, and other concerned citizens, the FAA has yet to address the impact this action may have on aviation system safety or efficiency. It is deeply troubling that the agency seems intent on proceeding with the closure of key air traffic control assets absent adequate safety data and study.

We recognize that the FAA faces difficult choices, but in this instance we remain opposed to the FAA's actions and will continue to urge action to keep contract towers open and operational.

Sincerely,

John D. Rockefeller, IV
Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Bill Shuster
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

John R. Thune
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Nick J. Rahall, II
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Maria E. Cantwell
Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security

Frank A. LoBiondo
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Aviation

Kelly A. Ayotte
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security