



June 27, 2017

The Honorable Eric Swalwell
129 Cannon House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Via Electronic Mail

RE: Opposition to H.R. 2997 - 21st Century AIRR Act

Representative Swalwell:

The City of Hayward, California owns and operates the Hayward Executive Airport, a General Aviation Reliever Airport in the San Francisco Bay Area, and one of just eighty-five small airports in the country to be designated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as a "National" General Aviation Airport, the highest category. Our airport generates jobs, has a multi-million-dollar economic impact, and provides a host of community services including emergency medical, law enforcement, media, and humanitarian flights. For these and other reasons, the City Council and I view the airport as an important asset to our community.

Accordingly, we take an interest in national policy debates that could impact the aircraft owners, pilots, and passengers that use our airport. After a review of U.S Representative Bill Schuster's bill (H.R. 2997) to remove our nation's air traffic control system from the FAA and privatize it, we have concluded that these reforms, however well intentioned, will have an adverse impact on the General Aviation industry and on our airport, without achieving the desired results.

The modernization of our air traffic control (ATC) system, the safest and most efficient in the world, can be addressed without the need for privatization. We are particularly opposed to placing ATC under the control of a private board of directors dominated by airline interests, with no oversight by Congress. ATC privatization has not gone well for general aviation in other countries, resulting in high user fees and impeding access to certain airports. Even countries that initially excluded general aviation aircraft from user fees, as now proposed under H.R. 2997, ultimately included them. Higher costs and access restrictions here could decrease business and recreational flying as well as harm interstate commerce. This in turn would have a detrimental effect on small airports nationwide. In our view, the billions of dollars and time that would be spent transitioning our nation's air traffic control system to a private entity can be better applied to the very task of modernization of existing systems.

In summary, we believe that technical reforms will benefit our air traffic control system, but we also believe the FAA should continue to provide the leadership to affect this change. Accordingly, we respectfully request that you do not support H.R. 2997.

Sincerely,


Barbara Halliday
Mayor

CC: City Council

