



STATE OF WASHINGTON
Office of the Governor

September 21, 2017

The Honorable John Thune
United States Senate
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
United States Senate
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Thune, Nelson, Murray and Cantwell:

I am writing to express my opposition to the privatization of the nation's air traffic control system.

Last year, the Senate wisely excluded privatization from its legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration. I urge the Senate to maintain that resolve against ATC privatization when it advances its FAA reauthorization bill. While the reasons to oppose privatization are numerous, I will focus on two major concerns.

Impact on rural airports and communities. In Washington, we have 137 public use airports with fewer than ten possessing regularly scheduled commercial air service. The remainder of the public use airports are predominantly general aviation facilities. These general aviation airports provide access to their communities from across the state and the nation supporting a wide range of services, from medical transport and wildfire suppression to helping farmers and inspecting utility lines. General aviation also partially fills the role that scheduled commercial air service provides to larger communities. Hence, any plans to increase user fees to fund privatization will have a direct and negative impact on the general aviation community within the state of Washington.

The current ATC system works well. While other countries have privatized their ATC systems, none of those countries deals with the complexities of the American aviation system. As you know, one-third of all flights take off from U.S. airports every day, making our skies the busiest in the world by a wide margin. In addition, the FAA controllers must work seamlessly with their counterparts in the Department of Defense to protect both civilian and military air traffic. The ability of a new entity, whose congressional oversight would be diminished, to manage the ATC system as safely and effectively as the FAA is far from certain.



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With the support of the U.S. Congress, the FAA has made billions of dollars in investments to modernize the air traffic control system. We should continue on that path, while maintaining the strong Congressional oversight that now exists.

Thank you for your efforts to prevent ATC privatization from becoming a reality. I urge you in the strongest terms to continue your work to reauthorize the FAA while forgoing privatization language.

Very truly yours,



Jay Inslee
Governor