

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0918

11 March 2013

Hon. Michael P. Huerta  
Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration  
Orville Wright Building (FOB10A)  
FAA National Headquarters  
800 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta,

I write on behalf of my constituents in Florida's 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District to express my strong safety concerns over the closure of Witham Field's (SUA) control tower. Witham Field's unique circumstances and vital role safeguarding flights, passengers, and ground structures in the region make it essential to national interest.

- Each year, Witham Tower serves the essential function of separating thousands of novice training aircraft and smaller piston aircraft from almost 10,000 jets. Without this layer of safety and oversight, mid-air collisions and accidents resulting from wake turbulence would be much more likely.
- Witham Field's runways are laid out in a triangular, intersecting pattern, making flight paths likely to cross as aircraft arrive and depart. Without a tower to carefully control the timing of takeoffs and landings, crossed paths can lead to tragic accidents.
- Witham Tower coordinates closely with Palm Beach International Airport (PBI) 30 miles away to manage conflicting arrivals and departures in their busy, shared airspace. The loss of a tower at Witham would create air safety concerns and flight delays in Palm Beach County.

Beyond the significant safety issues outlined above, closing Witham Tower would end up costing the taxpayer more than keeping it open. Without the tower, noise pollution from the airport would shoot up as nothing would prevent pilots from early turnout departures. As a result, FAA will need to complete a new Noise Exposure Map, which would cost millions of dollars—much more than the amount saved by closing Witham Tower.

I understand that FAA has not made a final decision on which towers to close in response to the recent and regrettable sequester cuts. I urge that for the safety of the flying public and the citizens of my district that you continue to operate Witham Field's air traffic control tower.

Respectfully,



Patrick E. Murphy  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS