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Congress of the United States
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26 April 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 again write on behalf of my constituents in Florida's 18th Congressional District to express my strong safety concerns over the closure of Witham Field's (SUA) control tower. Now that Congress has reallocated funds to boost the FAA's operations budget by \$250 million—enough to avoid furloughs and keep open our nation's important contract towers—I strongly urge the FAA to reverse its decision to close Witham's tower by June 15th, 2013. 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 urge FAA to use the additional operations funds provided by Congress to continue operating Witham Field's air traffic control tower for the safety of the flying public and the citizens of my district.

Respectfully,

Patrick E. Murphy
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

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