

Sample Contract Tower Letter from Airports to Your U.S. House Member

The Honorable.....
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Fax (202) xxx-xxxx

Dear Representative.....:

As Congress begins work on the Department of Transportation (DOT) fiscal year 2006 appropriations bill, (identify your airport) urges you to support funding of \$90.5 million for the regular FAA Federal Contract Tower Program, as well as an additional \$7.5 million to be used exclusively for the continuation of the contract tower cost-sharing program supported by Congress last year.

The FAA Federal Contract Tower Program, one of FAA's most cost-effective initiatives, has provided essential air traffic safety services for over two decades. Currently, 226 smaller airports in 46 states, including our airport, participate in the program. This represents 45 percent of all control towers in the U.S. In addition, federal contract towers handle approximately 25 percent of all control tower aircraft operations in the U.S. The safety and efficiency record of the Federal Contract Tower Program for the past two decades has been validated numerous times by the DOT Inspector General (IG) and FAA safety audits, as well as by the National Transportation Safety Board. The IG also has verified in numerous reports the cost-effectiveness of the program.

All federal contract controllers are FAA certified air traffic controllers. The majority of federal contract controllers are retired military or FAA controllers and virtually all have FAA or military air traffic control experience. FAA, the premier air traffic safety agency in the world, controls and oversees all aspects of the federal contract tower program, such as operating procedures, staffing plans, and certification of contract controllers.

As a result of this 23-year government/industry partnership, the Federal Contract Tower Program: (1) enhances aviation safety at smaller airports that in many cases would not have a tower; (2) consistently receives high marks for customer service from aviation users and pilots, and (3) helps small airports with retaining and developing commercial air service and corporate aviation. Moreover, federal contract towers operate together with FAA-staffed facilities throughout the country as part of a unified national air traffic control system.

The bottom line for us is without this highly successful federal program, FAA budget constraints could force closure of our tower or, at a minimum, force our local community to pay for air traffic safety services.

(You should include any anecdotal information that highlights the importance of the contract tower program to your community, i.e., safety, air service and general aviation/corporate aviation development and retainment).

(If your House member is a Republican, you should ask him or her to contact Congressman Jerry Lewis, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and Congressman Joseph Knollenberg, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development, The Judiciary, District of Columbia, and Independent Agencies, to support funding of \$90.5 million for the regular FAA Contract Tower Program in addition to \$7.5 million for the continuation of the contract tower cost-sharing program in the DOT FY '06 Appropriations bill. If your House member is a Democrat, you should ask him or her to contact Congressman David Obey, Ranking Democrat of the House Appropriations Committee, and Congressman John Olver, Ranking Democrat of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development, The Judiciary, District of Columbia, and Independent Agencies, to support funding of \$90.5 million for the regular FAA Contract Tower Program in addition to \$7.5 million for the continuation of the contract tower cost-sharing program in the DOT FY '06 Appropriations bill.)

Your leadership on behalf of the FAA contract tower program has been very important and greatly appreciated by the airport community nationwide. We thank you for your continued support of this program and look forward to working with you and your staff to ensure its future success.

Sincerely yours,

Your Name
Title
Airport

cc: The Honorable Norman Mineta, Secretary of Transportation
The Honorable Marion Blakey, Administrator of the FAA

Blind copy: Spencer Dickerson (AAAE/USCTA Office; fax 703/820-1395)