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October 7, 2013

The Honorable Glenn Grothman
Chairman, Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Wisconsin Senate
Room 10 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Chairman Grothman:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), a not-for-profit membership organization, represents the general aviation interests of nearly 400,000 members nationwide – including over 6,500 in Wisconsin. Since 1939, AOPA has been committed to ensuring the safety, future viability, and development of general aviation airports and their facilities as a part of our national transportation system. We write to express our support for Wisconsin Senate Bill 321.

Wisconsin Senate Bill 321 would provide liability protection for private owners of aviation landing facilities. While other privately owned recreational areas including campgrounds, bicycle courses, and others are afforded liability protections under Wisconsin law, private airfields, which are utilized in the same recreational manner may be held liable for a pilot's negligent activity at the airfield. With this possibility present, many private airfield owners choose to limit aviation activity at their airfield.

Senate Bill 321, following a national precedent of more than 20 other states enacting similar legislation, would expand general aviation's reach across the State by making it possible for those airfield owners to increase private, noncommercial usage of their airfield without fear of being held liable for incidents occurring on the airfield. With additional aviation activity occurring at private airfields, general aviation will continue to support both the citizens of the State and the continued growth of the \$3.5 billion annual economic impact of general aviation in Wisconsin.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. Should you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (301) 695-2095 or bryan.budds@aopa.org.

Very truly yours,

Bryan Budds
Great Lakes Regional Manager

cc: Wisconsin Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
The Honorable Joseph Leibham
The Honorable Paul Tittel