



# SPOKANE FLYER



WPA NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2007

## Lies Make the Skies Very Un-Friendly

[an article submitted from Blake McKinley]

**T**he airlines have been feeding passengers like you a steady string of lies about a serious issue that will affect all airline passengers: how the FAA is funded and managed in the future. Why?

Because the airlines are — again — looking for another huge tax bailout from the government (that means *taxpayers* — like you).

### Smart Skies? Hardly!

One magazine has an article called “Smart Skies.” It’s written by the head lobbyist for the airline industry and he makes the following statements that grossly distort the facts. He says...

- There isn’t money to modernize Air Traffic Control (ATC) system
- That satellites aren’t being used in the ATC system
- Airline delays are caused by the ATC system
- The efficient way the FAA is funded needs to be modernized
- The airlines pay more than their “fair share” of costs to run the FAA

It probably won’t surprise you to learn that this Washington lobbyist has, in every case, distorted the facts.

#### The facts:

- **There is plenty of money to modernize the ATC system. Even the government says so!**
- **Satellites are – today – an essential part of air navigation.**
- **A recent Dept. of Transportation report said that the delays Are a result of weather ... or the airlines themselves!**
- **The FAA’s current funding system has resulted in nothing less than the largest, safest, most efficient air transportation system in the world!**
- **The airlines pay more because they use far more of the system (that was designed just for them) than anyone else.**

Any of these other statements is just *another* effort to mask the incompetent ways the airlines run their business. What do the airlines *really* want? *Another* bailout, *another* major tax break, *another* loan guarantee. In the last decade these have totaled more than \$37 billion! **You deserve to know the truth.**

Before the airlines try to change a good thing, we urge you to visit:

[www.aviationacrossamerica.org](http://www.aviationacrossamerica.org) today. There you’ll learn how and why our air transportation system is the envy of the world. And why it’s so important to keep it that way. Have a good flight. And let’s keep the skies friendly for *all* air travelers.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**WED. JUNE 20TH**

**“Mid- Air Collision Avoidance [MACA]**

**and**

**Local Airspace”**

**By**

**Capt. Dennis Casebon**

**Sat. JUNE 23rd**

**Fly-out**

Meet at EAA/WPA

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**LIVE PICTURE:**

<http://www.feltsfieldflyers.com>

Senator Maria Cantwell  
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June 12, 2007

**RE: AVIATION USER FEE ISSUE**

In the United States of America, we have the safest and most extensive aviation system in the world! Yet on May 16<sup>th</sup> you cast a vote against the Nelson/Sununu Amendment to the Senate FAA Funding Bill for the Aviation Investment and Modernization Act of 2007 (S.1300), which meant a vote supporting the FAA User Fee proposal. The User Fee proposal being championed by President Bush and FAA Administrator, Marion Blakey, will adversely impact general aviation. By adversely impacting general aviation, the net result will be a negative impact on the pool of funds that currently support our aviation system here in America as well as negatively impacting aviation related businesses.

Here are some facts regarding general aviation and its benefits to society as well as the nation's economy:

- General aviation supports 1.3 million jobs and more than \$102 billion of total economic activity in the United States annually. As a result, the jobs supporting general aviation are found all across America.
- America is blessed with more than 20,000 airports and heliports. The airlines only serve 540 of these airports, or less than 3 percent. Imagine how inadequate your car or truck would be if you could only drive on 3 percent of America's roads or highways.
- Each year, 166 million passengers, including many from your community, fly on the small airplanes of general aviation. That makes the 211,000 airplanes of GA the nation's largest "airline." That's more passengers than American Airlines, United Air Lines, and Northwest Airlines combined.
- By using small aircraft and small local airports, tens of thousands of cancer patients, burn victims, and sick or injured children have been able to fly for free to world-class medical centers in major cities, even when these patients live hundreds of miles away in rural communities.

Your local weather forecast comes straight from the forecasting system that was created to serve America's pilots. Every time you look at a weather map on TV, the temperatures, cloud cover, precipitation, and winds are being reported to you from weather stations located at thousands of airports across America. So, when you see the temperature on a weather map, think about the local airport that's at that location.

FAA Administrator, Marion Blakey, paints an erroneous picture of the impact of User Fees on whom she calls, "Joe Cessna", the average general aviation pilot. The fact is that the average general aviation pilot, with an average income between \$35,000 and \$100,000, is not at all in the wealthy echelon of society and in fact, User Fees will adversely affect the average pilot. Based on experiences around the world, a \$25 user fee will escalate and expand to all segments of general aviation.

**As pilot and a lifelong aviation enthusiast, I endorse the following principles in consideration of how the FAA should be financed in the future:**

- Federal airport funding should be sustained at no less than current levels (\$3.7 billion).
- Excise taxes are the best way for all aviation users to support the system.
- Congress must maintain its oversight of the FAA.
- The General Fund must continue to provide at least 21.5% of the FAA's budget.

**There is no place for user fees in the world's largest, safest, most efficient air transportation system**

Alaska Airlines and many of its counterparts would like you and the rest of the general population to believe that their services are adversely impacted by general aviation. The fact is that at the busiest commercial airports in the United States, general aviation constitutes merely 4% of the operations that occur – hardly an impact that would constitute any adverse significance on their operations whatsoever. Don't be fooled, the airline's desire to control the airways and at the same time get a huge tax break at the expense of American general aviation. Consequently, I am adamantly opposed to any attempt to cut the only tax the airlines pay themselves toward the Aviation Trust Fund, by eliminating their 4.3 cents per gallon fuel tax. If money is truly needed to modernize the aviation system, then why give the airlines another huge tax break?

Even though, as a member of the Senate Commerce Committee, you voted to pass S.1300, which places a \$25 “surcharge” – a user fee in disguise. I would now encourage you to ultimately withdraw your support of this concept as it works its way through the Senate Finance Committee by rejecting the Commerce Committee’s idea of a “surcharge” – the start of User Fees to fund aviation and continuing to fund the system through efficiently collected excise taxes. Additionally, the question must be raised regarding how rational it is to allow the airlines to cease paying their 4.3 cents a gallon fuel tax, the only aviation tax they pay themselves.

One of the duties of the government is to provide a safe transportation system. For instance, let’s imagine that a municipality decides that traffic lights are costing too much money to operate. To off-set this cost the municipality decides to collect a User Fee by installing coin meters for drivers to plug with \$0.25 every time they come to a stop light. This all sounds great until drivers decide they can avoid plugging the traffic light meter by cutting through the neighboring residential area. Now the municipality has an increase in traffic on neighborhood streets where kids are playing, due to this increased traffic in the residential area, police personnel are required to monitor traffic in these neighborhoods instead of dealing with more egregious offences. The sole purpose in the municipality placing the traffic light is to provide a safe transportation environment. The impact of User Fees in aviation will result in a temptation to obtain weather from non-aviation resources, to be tempted to not file a flight plan, and finally to be tempted to make decisions based upon what the services will cost instead of making decisions where the goal is to increase one’s safety envelope. The current system is the safest in the world because of the resources that are available upon keying one’s microphone. These resources are available due to the funding structure that is currently available.

The bottom line is that user fees for ANY segment of the aviation industry must be rejected by Congress as they are a first step toward privatizing the air traffic control system which will eliminate reasonable general aviation access to the aviation system which would hence preclude “Joe Cessna” from flying into many of the communities across the country we currently travel to for work and pleasure. I would urge your support for continuing the use of aviation excise taxes to fund modernization of the air traffic control system. The continued use of this nearly four decade old model is supported by statements from the Congressional Budget Office, General Accountability Office, and the Department of Transportation Inspector General who have all said the tested and proven system of aviation taxes can provide the needed financing for the aviation improvements. The Aviation Trust Fund, which is supported by taxes on aviation users, under jurisdiction of the Senate Finance Committee, not new funds under other Committees, is the best way to pay for aviation improvements.

The next time you are campaigning and are using non-commercial modalities of air travel around the State of Washington, realize that you are availing yourself of general aviation and the efficiency it brings to your campaign schedule. Please feel free to contact me regarding this important aviation issue.

Regards, Blake McKinley, Jr. DDS

**Miscommunications are a Major Cause of Runway Incursions.**

Notice Number: NOTC0895: **Runway Incursion PD statistics FY2007 versus equivalent period FY2006**

FY07 (thru 6/7)		FY06 (thru 6/7)	
Southern Region	39	Southern Region	25
All Other Regions	100	All Other Regions	92

Below is a regional survey breakdown of the 39 runway incursion errors caused by pilots in the region:

- 12 - Entered runway or crossed runway hold bars without ATC clearance\*
- 11 - Issued and read back hold short instructions, then entered runway    4 - Landed without ATC clearance
- 10 - Departed without ATC clearance\*        2 - Departed from wrong runway

\* A single aircraft is responsible for multiple (2) RIs

Miscommunications are a major cause of runway incursions. Please take a look at the next five pages, located on the link below, which features information regarding communications with Air Traffic Control.

[https://www.faa.gov/air\\_traffic\\_control/operations\\_dept/2007/Jun/Good\\_Radio\\_Communications\\_to\\_Avoid\\_Runway\\_Incursions.pdf](https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic_control/operations_dept/2007/Jun/Good_Radio_Communications_to_Avoid_Runway_Incursions.pdf)



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