



## GENERAL AVIATION AT RISK!

The following article is from the AOPA magazine:

### 2007 User Fee Issue

#### **GA's biggest threat makes landfall** **User fees and tax hikes in president's budget**

For months, AOPA has felt the tension in the calm before a federal funding hurricane. But now with the release of the president's fiscal 2008 budget proposal on February 5, that storm has taken shape and is gathering energy: Tax increases and user fees for general aviation are now upon us.

"This is real, and it's just as bad as we thought it was going to be," said AOPA President Phil Boyer. "That's why we've been lining up opposition to it in Congress. It's going to take an all-out fight by the aviation community to defeat this."

Boyer isn't wasting any time. He'll continue his extensive round of meetings with lawmakers and be on Capitol Hill on Tuesday. This dovetails AOPA's press conference with reporters last week.

President Bush released his \$2.9 trillion spending plan in four massive volumes. The overarching philosophy is to increase military spending while squeezing the rest of the government. Unfortunately, the proposal would radically alter the funding mechanism for the world's largest, safest, and most successful air traffic control system. If that were not enough, the budget would slash airport funding by \$1 billion.

The president's budget sets the tone for the FAA's coming reauthorization bill, which needs to be passed into law by the end of this September. The bill will determine who pays what and how much the FAA will receive in its budget.

"While we won't know the specifics until the actual FAA reauthorization proposal is released later this month, we have strong reason to believe it would increase GA fuel taxes by nearly fourfold," said Boyer. "As if a huge tax increase isn't bad enough, the budget makes it clear that the FAA would charge user fees for GA operations in 'the nation's most congested airspace,' which sounds like Class B airspace.

"And don't think you could get out of paying fees by avoiding Class B airspace. The FAA is also looking at dramatically increasing fees for aircraft registration and replacement pilot certificates. The FAA wants to collect user fees on many new services such as processing pilot and medical certificates," Boyer added.

AOPA maintains that the current system has worked well over the past four decades and should be preserved. Special interests in Washington, D.C., are coalescing to destroy it. The FAA wants user fees, which are different than taxes, because the source of funding would allow it to sidestep the congressional budget process. The agency could spend the money the way it wants to without congressional scrutiny and use the fees to fund its manufactured budgetary crisis.

(cont. pg 2)

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Wed. March 21st.

"CRM and Error Management"

By: 'Bud' Nevers  
6:00PM

*Marie Callender's*

2111 N. Argonne

**APRIL 21st**

**"IFR-VFR CHARTS"**

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**LIVE PICTURE:**

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The White House Office of Management and Budget, meanwhile, wants to spend less from the Treasury's general funds to help reduce the budget deficit. And the airlines simply want to wrest control of the system and use it for their own benefit.

No one has explained how the user fees would be collected and accounted for.

"All this ridiculous funding scheme would do is make aviation more expensive and more complex," Boyer said. "Why destroy a critical function that the government actually does well?"

For more information, and complete text see "[The FAA Funding Debate and User Fees.](#)"

**[www.aopa.org/faafundingdebate/](http://www.aopa.org/faafundingdebate/)**

**Contact your congressmen and let them know—— “no GA user fees”**

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Maria Cantwell (D-WA) 511 Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington DC <u>20510</u> (202) 224-3441 <a href="http://Cantwell.senate.gov/contact/index.html">Cantwell.senate.gov/contact/index.html</a>	Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA 5 <sup>th</sup> District) <a href="http://mcmorris.house.gov/">http://mcmorris.house.gov/</a> 1708 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-2006 F (202) 255-3392
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MAY 5th

**Lower Granite Party!**  
work MAY 5th

Tom Morris and others from around the State are in the process of organizing a (work) party on the 5th of May at the Lower Granite Dam. There has been interest posted on the [pacificnorthwestflying.com](http://pacificnorthwestflying.com) chat room to help as well. Tom and others from around the area would like to see as much support for this event as possible. The Rangers/operators may also schedule a tour of the Lower Granite fish ladder as well!

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# ONE PILOT'S RESPONSE

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers.

I recently read your reply to Dr. Blake McKinley regarding the new aviation user fees.

I have to agree that there is going to be an increase in air traffic and higher demand on the air traffic system. However this demand is NOT coming from the general aviation group. General aviation has decreased to levels lower than that of the early 1980's. Just recently has it started to recover and is climbing back to pre-eighty's levels. The increase and demand is clearly caused by the airline industry and it's increase in activity.

You stated that the aviation trust fund has taken a significant reduction in revenue. As an airline employee I have personally taken a 40% cut in pay to offset the high cost of operations (fuel). Instead of raising ticket prices to pay for the fuel, bankruptcy procedures have allowed the airline management to force lease companies, suppliers, employees and airport boards into renegotiations to get only portions of what they were owed. The ticket tax levied at 7.5% is less today than it was 15 years ago. It is cheaper to fly today from Seattle to Europe than it was then, not even considering the devaluation of the dollar. All product costs have gone UP. Ticket prices have gone down, granted there have been some recent increases in some markets, but not to the extent to offset the true cost of doing business.

NOW the airlines would like GA to pay for their increasing activity. It is time to stop and look at what is causing the problem. It is not a Cessna 172 going VFR from Felts Field in Spokane to Yakima or Chelan. We pay through taxes levied on the gas that we purchase. If we go to a large airport we pay fees associated with that airport.

As to the FAA's spending habits, I just read where they (FAA) can not account for where the money went. An open checkbook without accountability is unacceptable. GA user fees would only open a door that can not be shut. General Aviation is paying its' share, the airlines would like for us to pay a portion of their share too.

Maybe it's time to limit the number of airliners to the routes, slots, and gates available. This simple change would stop the system from being overrun and match the number of activities to the air traffic service available. Then maybe the tickets would pay the cost they create.

Sincerely,  
Tom Morris

**April 21st. 2007**

**Spokane Falls Community College**

**Student Union Building #17**

**3410 W. Fort George Wright Dr.**

Don't miss this opportunity to receive valuable, FREE, aviation safety training from industry experts!

Please note that seminars are available in both rooms, Lounge A/B and Lounge C.

Plan ahead and register for the sessions that interest you!

Lounge A/B

Time: 0900 - 1130 "IFR Chart Smarts" Speaker: Richard Neher, FAA

Time: 1300 - 1530 "VFR Chart Smarts" Speaker: Richard Neher, FAA

Lounge C

Time: 0830 - 1015 "Attitude/Automation/Decision Making" Speaker: Rogers Shaw, FAA

Time: 1030 - 1200 "Night Flight; Avoiding The Hazards" Speaker: Dale Wilson, CWU

Time: 1300 - 1500 "Spatial Disorientation" Speaker: Rogers Shaw, FAA

**\*\* Visit <http://www.faa.gov> for further information and to register today \*\***

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