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Colorado Aviation Business Association (CABA) Voices Concerns Over Congressional Bill HR 4441 and Its Negative Impact on Colorado Businesses and Small Towns Throughout the State

Denver, CO – March 1, 2016 – The Colorado Aviation Business Association (CABA), a group of over 400 business and individual members representing business and general aviation organizations throughout Colorado, sent a letter to Colorado’s delegation in the U.S. House and Senate, urging them to oppose bill HR 4441. The bill, introduced by U.S. Representative Bill Shuster (R-9-PA) in early February, calls for privatization of the national air traffic control system and introduces dramatic changes to the way the system is funded.

“It may sound benign,” commented Mike Straka, Chairman of CABA, “but the mechanics behind this bill will not only have a negative impact on aviation businesses in Colorado, but also the potential to negatively impact small businesses and people in rural towns throughout Colorado like, Aspen, Steamboat and Gunnison.

CABA’s members range from small businesses like Mountain Aviation, who frequently operate charter and aeromedical flights to small, Colorado communities where airline service is unavailable, to larger Colorado-based businesses with aircraft capable of taking executives and other personnel throughout the state and elsewhere throughout the country.

The FAA reauthorization bill passed by the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and now before the full House for consideration, calls for the privatization the nation’s air traffic control (ATC) system, currently the busiest and safest in the world. Lobbied for by U.S. airline companies, the bill also shifts more of the cost for the ATC system towards the general aviation community.

The current ATC system is largely funded by the system’s users, including the airlines and small aircraft alike, through a fair and unbiased aviation fuel tax, assessed as a percentage of the cost of fuel.

Colorado has 14 airports with scheduled airline service, and 62 airports in smaller towns and rural areas. General Aviation in Colorado has played a vital role in the health of the economy in the State. In 2013 CDOT estimated the total economic impact of General Aviation in Colorado to be \$2.4 billion per year.

In addition, General Aviation directly supports over 20,100 jobs in the State. Related impacts of General Aviation visitors to Colorado supported 132,186 jobs and over \$13.2 billion in economic output.

“We want *all* Colorado businesses to thrive, grow, and create new jobs,” continued Straka. “That includes the airlines, like Frontier, all the way down to the smaller aviation companies who serve important roles in our remote towns and communities throughout Colorado. Our hope is that we can continue utilizing a fair system, such as the fuel tax system currently in place, to share in the cost of using this system.”

Note to Editors:

The mission of the Colorado Aviation Business Association is to promote the value of business and general aviation across the State of Colorado. Founded in 1994, the Colorado Aviation Business Association consists of over 400 businesses and individual members who live and work within the State of Colorado. CABA acts to collectively address and respond to issues impacting Colorado Airports including safety and operational effectiveness; to educate the general public about all aviation activities in the state; to preserve the state's airport related businesses as valuable economic assets to the community at large; and to provide for the training of future aviation professionals through its scholarship fund.

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