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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 13 in the Year of Our Lord 2013

Michael Huerta
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta:

The manner in which the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is considering trimming its budget is shocking to say the least. Rather than looking for waste and redundancies within the FAA as a means to save precious taxpayer dollars, the alternative you have proposed would shut down 40% of our nation's air traffic control towers.

This plan sounds like one hatched by a political hack, not a high-level Administrator entrusted with the safety of our nation's airways. The irrevocable consequences that may occur from these reckless actions border on willful negligence. Risking human lives by degrading the safety of private and commercial passengers alike is an unacceptable and dangerous path.

Within my own district we have been alerted that the Tyler Pounds Regional Airport control tower is one of the towers that will likely be cut. TPRA handles around 150,000 passengers per year, and when you add in the military and corporate air traffic, that number nearly **DOUBLES**. Not only do they have an ever increasing passenger load, the airport also provides services for the Air Education and Training Command (AETC) for the U. S. Military, is a reliever airport for DFW International Airport, is on the Airport Operations Center Diversion list for DFW and Houston Intercontinental airports, and is one of three cities in north Texas selected as an air evacuation processing center for the FEMA Incident Assistance Management Team.

I am asking you to provide me in writing the following:

- Besides proposing tower closures, what steps has the FAA taken to examine other avenues to bridge the funding gap? Did you consider cost savings through attrition of personnel and a hiring freeze? Considering overtime hours are more cost effective than providing another employee Health benefits as well as pension/retirement.
- Did you look at cost savings in closing FAA towers? Why was the decision made to close contract towers over FAA towers when statistics show that many contract tower airports are actually busier and handle more planes and passengers than their counterpart?
- What studies have been taken to ensure safety and operability of our nation's airways in the event 40% of our air traffic control towers are taken offline?

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- What was the exact criterion used in deciding which airports ended up on the possible closure list?
- Did you allow any exceptions to the above criteria? And, if so, what exactly were those exceptions?

I look forward to hearing your answers to these pressing questions. Please provide me with your written answer as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Louie Gohmert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "L".

Rep. Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress