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February 17, 2015

The Honorable Brian L. Clem, Chair
House Rural Communities, Land Use and Water Committee
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative Clem:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is the world's largest aviation membership association that represents the general aviation interests of our members nationwide, including over 4,900 in Oregon. Since 1939, AOPA has been committed to ensuring the safety, future viability, and development of general aviation as an integral part of our national transportation system. On behalf of AOPA and our members, we would like to express the general aviation community's strong support for House Bill 2038, which would clarify the inclusion of aviation activities on the list of outdoor recreational activities in Oregon's recreational use statute (ORS 105.672).

Many states have a recreational use statute that provides a degree of liability protection for landowners who allow the public to recreate on their lands as long as no fee is charged. However in Oregon, private use airfield owners are not certain that the recreational use statute pertains to them, and as a result, many deny aviation access to their private airfields. If Oregon's recreational use statute is amended through this legislation to clearly state that aviation is included in the list of recreational activities, private use airfield owners are more likely to allow the aviation community access to their property. Such broader access can stimulate aviation activity in the state, while facilitating a wide range of activities such as camping, hiking and other outdoor recreation.

It is important to note that while this legislation could facilitate broader use of private use airfields, it in no way eliminates or reassigns to a landowner the responsibility that pilots "shall, before beginning a flight, become familiar with all available information concerning that flight", as required by Federal Aviation Regulation 14CFR Part 91.103.

On behalf of AOPA and our members, we appreciate your support of House Bill 2038, and urge you to pass it out of committee. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (301) 695-2094.

Sincerely,

David R. Ulane, A.A.E.
Northwest Mountain Regional Manager

CC: House Rural Communities, Land Use and Water Members