



April 3, 2003

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are concerned about who is responsible for decisions affecting national security. On Monday, the Mayor of Chicago, without the required notice to any federal authority, and under the cloak of darkness, closed and demolished by bulldozer an important airport in our nation's air transportation system – Meigs Field. The general aviation community, representing every aspect of aviation except scheduled airlines and the military, is shocked and outraged that a mayor, using the pretext of national security, can destroy a national asset, create a significant safety risk and reduce capacity in an area already faced with significant aviation congestion.

To address what has occurred in Chicago and to prevent a repeat of this situation in other locations, we urge you to reaffirm federal authority over security matters affecting the nation's air transportation system. The action taken on Monday in Chicago is akin to a mayor or a governor destroying access ramps to a major interstate highway due to security concerns for traffic using that road. Elevating the importance of our national system of airports to that of our national system of highways will send a clear signal to those who would justify their actions in the name of homeland protection. No local official should be allowed to damage unilaterally the national aviation system as was demonstrated on Monday.

You urged the creation of a Department of Homeland Security to help protect the United States and our way of life, which we supported. Please do not stand idly by as our nation's airports and airspace face a patchwork of restrictions and closures via local and state power grabs.

We stand ready to assist you in achieving these mutual goals.

Sincerely,

Phil Boyer  
President  
Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association

Tom Poberezny  
President  
Experimental Aircraft Association

Ed Bolen  
President  
General Aviation Manufacturers Association

Roy Resavage  
President  
Helicopter Association International

Jim Coyne  
President  
National Air Transportation Association

Jack Olcott  
President  
National Business Aviation Association

cc: Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge, Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta, Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security Asa Hutchinson, TSA Administrator Admiral Jim Loy, FAA Administrator Marion Blakey