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NY AVIATION GROUP FIGHT PROPOSED LAW THAT THREATENS MUNICIPAL AIRPORTS

Albany, N.Y., August 3 2017 – NY’s organization of airport and aviation professionals is fighting legislation it says threatens aviation access, safety and the economic vitality of community airports by making it difficult for municipalities to secure state and federal funding for a specific airport, in this case East Hampton Airport.

“Enactment of this bill into law may not only jeopardize the safety of flight operations but will interfere with the established authority of the FAA to coordinate, plan and control air travel and the economic health of community airports and their vital role in the nationwide airport system,” explained John DelBalso, President of the New York Aviation Management Association (NYAMA).

The bill, which passed both houses of the State Legislature this session, would limit the Town of East Hampton’s current *and* future elected town boards to receive state or federal airport improvement grants only upon the adoption of a resolution subject to permissive referendum.

Most grants to airports are safety based, in many instances requiring prompt action on the part of airport sponsors to comply with federal and state safety standards. Delaying or impeding an airport sponsor’s ability to receive federal funding may result in the temporary or long term closure of the airports.

“The East Hampton Airport is part of the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems that identifies nearly 3,400 existing and proposed airports that are significant to national air transportation,” DelBalso pointed out. “Federal funding is critical to promoting infrastructure development projects that will bring these airports up to current design standards and add capacity to congested airports for the benefit of all the users of the nation’s air space.”

“This bill would set a dangerous precedent and could negatively impact an airport that is economically vibrant,” DelBalso warned. “East Hampton is an important part of the state’s and nation’s integrated system of airports that is currently home to over 100 based aircraft and more than 25,000 general aviation operations annually,” DelBalso said.

NYAMA believes that as a matter of public policy, Governor Andrew Cuomo should oppose legislation that allows a current Town Board to erect procedural barriers for future, duly elected town boards to overcome to exercise their decision-making authority over important town assets, in this case a vibrant transportation hub and economic engine for the local community and the state,” DelBalso concluded.

NYAMA and other organizations including the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association and the National Business Aviation Association are urging Governor Cuomo to veto the bill.

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