

April 29, 2013 - NEW UPDATE FROM CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION

HILL ACTION ITEM NEEDED RIGHT AWAY – If your Senator(s) and/or House member have been supportive of keeping your contract tower open beyond June 15, *we need you to call their offices right away with the following message* below. In briefings to industry on the FY '14 budget request, FAA Administrator Huerta said that the agency would restore funding for the contract tower program if funds were provided by Congress. Now, Congress has done just that for FY '13 so we to strike while the iron is hot.

We need every airport with a tower scheduled to close on June 15 to make these calls to the Hill right away. It is imperative that we get an immediate commitment from the FAA to keep the towers open. DOT and FAA were saying for weeks that they did not have the funds to keep these towers open. Now they clearly have that funding flexibility so we need as many members of Congress contacting DOT and FAA to get this commitment to the keep contract towers open.

The FAA sequester fix bill does not require the FAA to keep the towers open, so we need members of Congress pressing DOT and FAA as quickly as possible to do the right thing for aviation safety and keep these towers open for the remainder of FY '13.

Message to your Senator(s) and House Member:

"The FAA sequester fix legislation passed by Congress last week provides the DOT and FAA the funding flexibility to keep our tower open beyond June 15 without increasing FAA's budget. The statute does not explicitly protect the contract tower program so we urge Senator _____ (or) Congressman _____ to contact DOT Secretary LaHood and FAA Administrator Michael Huerta via phone call or letter as soon as possible and urge them to make an immediate commitment to keep contract towers open for the remainder of fiscal year 2013. Thank you very much for your continuing efforts to help us retain the important safety benefits our tower provides our airport."

April 26, 2013 - UPDATE FROM CONTRACT TOWER ASSOCIATION

The Senate this evening has approved legislation to prevent air traffic controller furloughs resulting from sequestration by allowing for the transfer of up to \$253 million in funding from the Airport Improvement Program or other FAA accounts to keep controllers on the job through the end of the fiscal year. Unfortunately, the deal does not include an explicit contract tower fix despite some media reports tonight.

Throughout the day, AAAE and USCTA made clear to key parties involved in the negotiations that a contract tower fix must be included in any FAA sequester fix. It was very clear from earlier drafts that the legislation

did include language aimed specifically at keeping contract towers operational through the end of the fiscal year as well. That language was removed from the bill very late in the process because of objections. At this point in the process, the objection from one senator can effectively derail even provisions that enjoy wide support – which is exactly what appears to have happened tonight in the Senate.

Earlier this week, FAA Administrator Michael Huerta testified that the furlough of air traffic controllers would allow the agency to achieve \$220 million of the more than \$600 million in required savings under sequestration. He has also testified that the closure of contract towers would achieve \$25 million in savings. There is an argument to be made – and Senator Moran, AAAE, USCTA, and many other interested parties – will be aggressive in making it that FAA now has the funds it needs to keep controllers on the job and contract towers open.

IMPORTANT NOTE: We just finished conversations with key Senate staff involved all day in the negotiations and they made it very clear to us that they intend to keep strong pressure on DOT Secretary LaHood and FAA Administrator Huerta to use the extra money provided in the Senate bill to keep the 149 contract towers open beyond June 15. DOT and FAA had said along that they had no options but to close these towers because of a lack of resources. The \$253 million provided in the Senate bill tonight provides resources to keep these 149 contract towers open.

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