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*Congress of the United States*  
*House of Representatives*  
*Washington, DC 20515-4209*

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IN EUROPE (U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION)

July 21, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Chairman  
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Aviation  
2113 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Chairman DeFazio and Chairman Larsen,

I'm writing to express my continued concern with the formula that was used to distribute economic relief to airports as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which produced massive windfalls to certain small airports at the expense of the intended targets, major airports that serve commercial aviation.<sup>1</sup>

The CARES Act emergency relief was intended to support U.S. airports that experienced severe economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency, not to bolster or

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<sup>1</sup> Benson, Nick, "8 April: US & Canada COVID-19 Aviation Traffic Report," JetTip, <https://jettip.net/blog/8-april-us-canada-covid-19-aviation-traffic-report>

quadruple smaller, more private airports' budgets. This relief was disproportionately awarded to smaller, less commercial and less trafficked airports based on a formula crafted by the U.S. Senate and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which was primarily based on airports' carried debt rather than airports' commercial passengers and loss of revenue.

Even though the FAA subsequently made some minor adjustments, many small airports are still set to initially receive grants for at least four years' worth of operating expenses. And the FAA has notified those airports, most of which were allocated \$18 million since they didn't hold debt, that they could receive the remainder of that money if they submit a capital program justifying its use.

This is outrageous. This is a bonanza and a windfall for these airports.

The CARES Act relief was not intended to reward airports that did not have debt, it was intended to help airports that were severely impacted by the coronavirus and allow them to maintain employees until service returns. The Heroes Act must rectify this unintended allocation of CARES Act funding and prohibit the FAA from awarding any additional money to these airports from the CARES Act notwithstanding any agreement, promise, statement or policy that might have been agreed to by the FAA.

Therefore, I respectfully request that any upcoming coronavirus relief package prohibit any airport that already received grants for four years' worth of operating expenses from receiving any additional funding. I would also appreciate any formula used for funding consideration to focus on both enplanements and cargo tonnage.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Should you have any questions regarding these requests, please contact Alex Schnelle in my office at [alex.schnelle@mail.house.gov](mailto:alex.schnelle@mail.house.gov) or 202-225-3265.

As always, I remain,

Sincerely,



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress