



May 27, 2026

City of Boulder
Mayor and City Council
1777 Broadway
Boulder, CO 80302

TRANSMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL: citycouncil@bouldercolorado.gov

Re: May 28, 2026, Boulder City Council Meeting—Airport Funding Decision

Dear Mayor Brockett and Members of the City Council:

On behalf of the undersigned state and national aviation advocacy organizations, we submit this as a follow up to our April 23, 2026 (attached) letter at the request of airport stakeholders to provide relevant facts and context for your expected vote regarding potential acceptance of FAA grant funding for the Boulder Municipal Airport. While we hope our April 23 letter was helpful, this letter simply focuses on the importance of accepting FAA grant funds.

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is the world's largest aviation membership organization, representing more than 200,000 pilots and aircraft owners nationwide. The Colorado Pilots Association (CPA) represents more than 700 members statewide and works to promote aviation safety, protect pilots' rights, and educate the public on aviation-related issues. Together, our organizations represent nearly 10,000 members across Colorado, including approximately 1,000 constituents who live and work in the vicinity of Boulder Municipal Airport.

A Strategic Investment in Safety and Infrastructure

Accepting FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant funds is not simply a funding decision—it is a strategic commitment to safety, operational reliability, and long-term infrastructure resilience. The AIP is the federal government's primary mechanism for investing in public-use airports, providing billions of dollars annually for critical upgrades such as runway rehabilitation, taxiway improvements, lighting systems, and modern safety equipment. These projects are essential to maintaining compliance with national safety standards and are often too capital-intensive to fund locally without significant taxpayer burden.

Reducing Local Financial Burden While Advancing Critical Projects

AIP grants allow communities to complete high-priority infrastructure improvements without placing undue strain on local budgets. By leveraging federal funds, local decision makers can preserve financial flexibility while still advancing essential airport projects. This approach ensures infrastructure needs are met proactively, rather than deferred—avoiding higher long-term repair costs and maintaining safe, efficient operations for both residents and businesses.

Airports as Proven Economic Engines

Extensive economic research confirms that airports are catalysts for community prosperity. Across the United States, commercial service airports support millions of jobs, generate hundreds of billions in payroll, and produce trillions in economic output annually. These figures demonstrate that investment in airport infrastructure translates directly into job creation, increased wages, and broader economic activity—not only on-airport but across surrounding industries such as hospitality, tourism, logistics, and trade.

Direct and Measurable Local Benefits

At the state and regional level, the impact is equally compelling. In Colorado, public-use airports collectively support hundreds of thousands of jobs and generate tens of billions in total economic activity, underscoring their central role in economic competitiveness. Individual airports further illustrate this effect through substantial job creation, payroll, and economic value while contributing significant tax revenues that fund local services. These outcomes are closely tied to sustained investment in airport infrastructure—often supported by AIP funding.

Immediate Job Creation and Long-Term Growth

AIP-funded projects produce both immediate and lasting economic returns. In the short term, construction, engineering, and consulting work create high-quality local jobs and inject capital into the regional economy. In the long term, improved airport infrastructure enhances capacity, efficiency, and reliability—making the region more attractive to airlines, cargo carriers, and businesses that depend on strong transportation networks. This increased connectivity drives business expansion, boosts tourism, and strengthens supply chains.

Strengthening Community Resilience and Quality of Life

Beyond economic gains, modernized airports improve quality of life for residents. AIP investments support safer operations, reduced delays, improved emergency response capabilities, and enhancements such as noise mitigation and environmental upgrades. These improvements make the airport a more reliable and responsible community asset while preparing it for future challenges, including growing demand and environmental considerations.

A High-Return Decision for Long-Term Prosperity

In summary, accepting AIP grant funding represents a high-return, low-risk opportunity. It enables critical safety improvements, reduces local financial burden, generates immediate employment, and drives sustained economic growth. Communities that invest in their airports through federal programs like AIP consistently position themselves for stronger business attraction, increased economic resilience, and improved quality of life—making this decision not just prudent, but essential for long-term prosperity.

We appreciate the time and attention the City Council is devoting to this issue and thank you for your continued engagement on a matter of lasting importance to Boulder.

Should you or your staff have questions or wish to discuss these issues further, please do not



hesitate to contact either of the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Andrew Holmes
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CC:

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Director, Colorado Department of Transportation-Division of Aeronautics