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October 10, 2025

City of Longmont
ATTN: Longmont Mayor and City Council
350 Kimbark St.
Longmont, CO 80501

TRANSMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Re: AOPA Current Position Regarding SA08 – “Operations at Non-Towered Airports”

Dear Mayor Peck and Members of the Longmont City Council:

I write to bring to your attention a matter of concern regarding the proposed "saturated pattern" policy discussed in the October 7, 2025, Longmont City Council Meeting Packet (Attachment 1), specifically within the "Background and Issue Analysis" section. This section cites guidance from the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) suggesting that *“many nontowered airports with heavy-to-moderate traffic have a ‘saturated pattern’ policy; i.e., touch-and-go landings are not permitted when five or more airplanes are circulating in the pattern.”*

While this information was indeed published in our Air Safety Institute’s Safety Advisor 08 (SA08) as part of the “Operations and Proficiency” series, we must emphasize that this document is at least seventeen years old and does not reflect AOPA’s current position and is not currently reflected in any known authoritative Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) policy or regulatory guidance. As a result, we are in the process of removing any reference to the outdated Safety Advisor while deactivating or redirecting any URLs that point to the material.

First, the term “saturated pattern” is not recognized or defined in any current FAA policy or regulatory guidance, nor is it found in authoritative documents such as the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) or FAA Advisory Circular 90-66C (Non-Towered Airport Flight Operations). The origin of the phrase remains unclear, and we regret its inclusion in our earlier publication. To avoid further confusion or misapplication, AOPA respectfully requests that the City of Longmont refrain from referencing the term “saturated pattern” or attributing it to AOPA in any official materials or policy discussions moving forward.

Second, it appears that SA08 may have been misinterpreted as implying AOPA support for restricting touch-and-go operations. We wish to be absolutely clear:

AOPA does not support restrictions on touch-and-go landings.

Touch-and-go operations are a fundamental component of pilot training, critical for developing the next generation of safe and proficient aviators. These operations are governed by 14 CFR

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Part 91 and conducted in accordance with FAA regulations and guidance, not local policy. As correctly noted in public documents from Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport (RMMA), CO – see [RMMA Frequently Asked Questions](#) -- **only the FAA has authority to restrict such operations**. We ask that the Council carefully consider the broader impact of restricting critical flight training activities—not only on the airport’s users but also on the national need for a robust pipeline of well-trained pilots. as touch-and-go operations in particular are vital to training the pilots that will serve our communities and the nation for decades to come.

Finally, we fully recognize and support the need for responsible airport operations and community engagement. AOPA has long advocated for voluntary noise abatement procedures and encourages a “fly friendly” philosophy. However, **we strongly urge the City of Longmont to table any proposed policy that would seek to implement a so-called “saturated pattern” policy or discourage or limit touch-and-go operations at Vance Brand airport** as this course of action will serve the best interests of safety for both aviators using Vance Brand airport and the broader Longmont community.

If any of you have any questions on this matter or any other general aviation-related topics, I welcome the opportunity to speak with you directly any time.

Sincerely,



Brad Schuster, C.M.
Northwest Mountain Region Manager
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association

Attachment: 10/07/2025 – Longmont City Council Meeting Packet RE: “Draft Saturated Pattern Policy and Other Airport-Related Items”

CC:

Harold Dominguez, City Manager
Levi Brown, Vance Brand Airport Manager
Longmont Airport Advisory Board
FAA Airport District Office, Denver
FAA Flight Standards District Office, Denver
Director, Colorado Department of Transportation-Division of Aeronautics
President, Colorado Pilots Association