

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

June 15, 2020

The Honorable Stephen Dickson
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Dickson:

We write you today to express our concerns with the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) reduction of operating hours of the Air Traffic Control tower (ATC) and Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) facility at the Grant County International Airport (MWH) in Moses Lake, Washington. While we appreciate the agency's stated willingness to be flexible on this issue – we can't lose sight of the fact that MWH is an integral asset to Washington's unique military and aviation industries, which provides critical support for national security, economic development, and air equities during the wildfire season and beyond to the country, Pacific Northwest region, and the state of Washington.

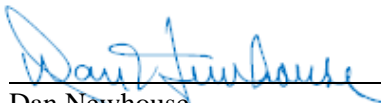
First and foremost, the Port of Moses Lake, operators at MWH, and other interested stakeholders appreciate that the FAA Regional Administrator committed to no further reductions of operating hours at MWH as previously indicated. However, we still believe the May 2020 reduction of evening hours at MWH creates an additional burden and adds too much risk to our constituents' safety as we begin what could be a dangerous wildfire season.

As background, MWH hosts a variety of unique civilian and military aviation activities that provide benefits that extend well beyond Grant County and Central Washington. All of the various users of MWH have one thing in common – they require the ATC tower and TRACON to be open early in the day and late into the evening to maximize their ability and take full advantage of the rare combination of factors that make MWH unique in American aviation.

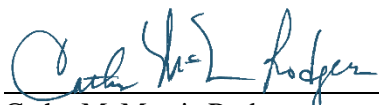
During a conference call last week with FAA Regional Administrator David Suomi, members of the Washington congressional and state delegation agreed that pre-May 2020 standard operating hours must return as soon as safely possible. To that point, we appreciate Mr. Suomi's commitment that the FAA will remain flexible with MWH operators. We also agree and understand the intention behind the reduced hours was to maintain proper COVID-19 safety guidelines. In recent weeks, the FAA has proven at other airports that controllers can remain safe and maintain pre-COVID-19 operating hours. Safety is paramount for both tower operators but also critical military readiness and wildfire safety. Furthermore, we understand that the Port of Moses Lake, which operates MWH, has offered to provide additional cleaning supplies and other personal protective equipment (PPE).

We appreciate the commitment and flexibility from the FAA Regional Director David Suomi to work with the Port of Moses Lake and the community at Grant County International Airport. We respectfully request that the FAA give serious consideration to restoring pre-May 2020 standard operating hours for MWH operators and all aviation activities that rely on the ATC and TRACON facilities. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

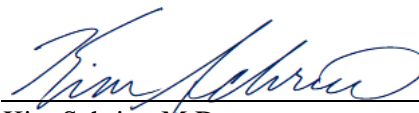
Sincerely,


Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress


Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress