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October 11, 2001

The Honorable Jane Garvey
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Garvey:

I write to inquire about the FAA's enhanced Class B restrictions that have been in place since the September 11 terrorist attacks. It is imperative that our national security is ensured. However, it is equally important that actions taken in the name of national security have the effect of enhancing that security.

Small airports throughout our country contribute enormously to their local economies. Since most of these airports rely on business from pilots who fly under visual flight rules (VFR), they are suffering extreme financial hardship under the enhanced restrictions which prohibit VFR flights by licensed pilots. Moreover, pilots with years of experience and businesses dependent on being able to fly are currently grounded and losing their livelihoods. I would note that Michigan is home to several small airports and many pilots who are being severely impacted by these restrictions.

It is curious that student pilots are permitted to undertake VFR flights in most of the affected areas, while pilots who have had their licenses for many years are being grounded. Furthermore, it appears inconsistent that a student is permitted to fly, but then restricted from flying once he or she obtains a pilot's license.

Again, it is important to protect our national security, but it must be accomplished with meaningful policies. Given the disastrous effects the current policy is having on general aviation and small airports, I respectfully request that the FAA review the enhanced Class B restrictions. I would also appreciate a report on its basis and effects, as well as when the restrictions will be lifted.

Please do not hesitate to contact Pete Filon in my office if you have any questions regarding this letter.

With every good wish,

Sincerely yours,

John D. Dingell
Member of Congress

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