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2 April 2021

House Corporations Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street, Rm 313  
Providence, RI

**TRANSMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION**

Email: [HouseCorporations@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseCorporations@rilegislature.gov)

**RE: Rhode Island House Bill 6067 - An Act for the Preservation of Safe Airspace.**

Chairman Representative Solomon and members of the House Corporations Committee,

The Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA) is the world's largest aviation membership organization representing the general aviation interests of 330,000 aircraft owners and pilots across the country, including 600 from the state of Rhode Island. **On behalf of these members AOPA supports House Bill 6067**, an act for the Preservation of Safe Airspace.

House Bill 6067 will improve airspace protection coordination among local and state jurisdictions for publicly owned airports in the state. We believe that it is important that all local stakeholders, as well as the Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC), accept shared responsibility to ensure that publicly owned airports continue to operate safely to protect and preserve the well-being of pilots, passengers, and those in the surrounding communities.

The Westerly State (WST) Airport located on the south coast of Rhode Island serves as a vital lifeline and transportation link for Block Island and the communities in the southwest corner of the state. In 2019, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) was forced to displace the runway threshold for three of the four runways at WST due to approach zone obstruction hazards that remain unresolved, thereby shortening the available takeoff distance and vastly reducing the airport's utility. Obstruction hazards, like trees, jeopardize safety when left unmitigated. Similar hazards exist around many of the state's airports and have even rendered the Newport State (UUU) Airport's instrument approaches unusable during inclement weather and at night—those times when these procedures are most relied upon.

We understand that the bill affirms the existing federal definition of “approach”, “approach zone”, and “approaches” as consistent with definitions of airport land and airspace as set forth by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as stated in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 77 (“Safe, Efficient Use, and Preservation of Navigable Airspace”). In addition to clarifying existing state law, the legislation recognizes the need for a statewide solution to ensure the preservation of airspace vital for “the approach, landing and taking off of aircraft to be utilized in the interest of the public for those purposes.”

For these reasons, AOPA supports House Bill 6067. Please consider AOPA to be a resource on matters impacting general aviation. For questions or concerns, contact AOPA Eastern Regional Manager [sean.collins@aopa.org](mailto:sean.collins@aopa.org) or by phone at (301)695-2090.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean M. Collins", is centered on a light-colored rectangular background.

Sean M. Collins, AOPA  
Eastern Regional Manager