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SUPPORT LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTONOMY!

Dear Colleague:

Many of the debates over the last four years here on Capitol Hill have revolved around federalism: the age-old debate about the proper role of the federal government in the affairs of states, counties, and cities. The policy needs of today have been weighted against the intent of the Framers of the Constitution who created the world's first federal republic.

While many of us agree to disagree over how much of a policy role the federal government should take in many matters, one issue appears settled: how states, counties, and cities use to fund the services they provide to their citizens is no business of the federal government.

Unfortunately, there is still one area in which Washington ties the hands of local governments and prevents them from serving their constituents' needs. While local and state governments often charge user fees for many local services, they are restricted by the FAA from charging the necessary user fees (passenger facilities charges, or PFCs) for improvements in the airports they own and operate.

This intrusive federal regulation is clearly unfair and unjustified – it would be similar to DOT capping tolls on state-owned roads or the EPA telling cities how much they can charge for garbage pickup or sewer service. We need to allow local governments to conduct their business efficiently and manage and fund their airports without Washington getting in the way.

While the upcoming aviation bill (H.R. 1000) does not completely solve this problem, it takes a step in the right direction by loosening the statutory cap on this local government authority. Our cities and counties deserve the right to make their own decisions on how to increase airport capacity, improve safety, and decrease delays at the airports they own. Join us in opposing any amendment that would continue to restrict local autonomy in this way.

Sincerely,

JOHN T. DOOLITTLE
United States Representative