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September 26, 2008

Ms. Mackenzie Moynihan  
Staff Planner  
Kittitas County Community Development Services  
411 North Ruby, Suite 2  
Ellensburg, WA 98926

Subject: Airport Heights Rezone (RZ-08-00009) and Preliminary Plat (LP-08-00026)

Dear Ms. Moynihan:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of 414,000 members, more than two-thirds of the nation's pilots – including 49,000 of our members in the state of Washington. On behalf of our membership, AOPA is committed to ensuring the future viability and development of general aviation airports and their facilities as part of a national transportation system.

AOPA opposes the rezoning and proposed Airport Heights preliminary plat because it would permit residential development too close to the Cle Elum Municipal Airport (S93), an essential public facility and it is not in accordance with the County Comprehensive Plan.

### **Zoning Change to Allow Residential Development Incompatible**

AOPA opposes any zoning change that would permit additional residential development adjacent to the airport. Currently, the subject property is zoned for agricultural use and would allow a single residential unit per 3-acre parcel. The request to change the zoning to Planned Urban Development (PUD) and to create lots for 14 residential units less than 1000 feet from the extended centerline of S93's Runway 7/25 is not in keeping with the principles of compatible land use around airports. However, the PUD designation does allow for commercial uses, which would be more compatible given the impacts residences would incur from normal aircraft operations at the airport.

### **Project is Not Compatible With Current County Comprehensive Plan**

AOPA is opposed to this rezoning request because it is in direct conflict with the current County Comprehensive Plan. Kittitas County adopted an updated County Comprehensive Plan in May, 2008. The County listed several airport related Goals, Purposes and Objectives in that update that this rezoning request fails to consider.

Most significantly GPO 4.15 states "Protect Kittitas County Airport (Bowers Field), Cle Elum Municipal, De Vere Field and Easton State airports from adjacent incompatible land uses and/or activities that could impact the present or future use of the airports as essential public facilities."

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In addition, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Washington Department of Transportation Aviation Division are in the process of investing approximately \$2 million dollars to rebuild the runway and make other improvements at S93. These improvements require the airport sponsor, the City of Cle Elum, to take appropriate measures to ensure compatible land uses surrounding the airport. The County has a responsibility to help protect the airports within the County. As proposed, the residential component of this project is not compatible with Cle Elum Municipal Airport.

AOPA must oppose this project and requests that the County not approve the rezoning unless residential uses are prohibited. Thank you for your consideration of our views on this issue. If we can be of further assistance please contact our staff at 301-695-2200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Collins", with a stylized flourish extending to the left.

John L. Collins  
Senior Liaison  
Airports