



Members of the Finance Committee Bill # 6387

My name is Wayne Toher and I am President of Reliant Air in Danbury, CT and the Danbury Municipal Airport. I have been working at the Danbury Airport since 1976 and since started Reliant Air in 1981. I am a pilot with over 12,000 hours, an FAA certified mechanic and Authorized Inspector. My Company operates 11 aircraft that include 4 jets, 3 turboprop aircraft as well as another 3 piston powered twin engine aircraft. We also park 35 other aircraft here on our apron. We employ 25 local resident pilots, mechanics, linecrew and office staff.

In the 70's and 80's I have observed numerous aircraft leave Danbury for New York on October 1st of each year in hopes of avoiding the unfair property tax that had been the law during those times. The larger aircraft didn't bother with this shuffle every year and remained at Westchester, Stewart, and Dutchess County Airports. Since 1994 we have removed the property tax on aircraft and invited all those larger aircraft back into our State now paying a registration fee similar to watercraft. Those aircraft have brought transportation in and out of Connecticut to a much higher level of reliability, safety, and convenience to Connecticut residents. Along with those aircraft, we have created a support structure thus creating many, many jobs. We have also gained revenue from those aircraft purchasing fuel in this state in quantities never seen before. For example; those fuel purchases are taxed in Danbury at 12 cents a gallon over and above the Federal Excise taxes that pay for our airports and their improvements.

My Company has made substantial investment in Danbury Airport by building a new 3 million dollar facility, purchasing aircraft in our own fleet worth in excess of 8 million. These investments were made all at the wrong time, about 3 years ago. We have endured this last economic downturn and all of us here have tightened our belts. We are just starting to see an increase in every department.

Bill 6387 says the State of Connecticut wished to reinstate property tax on Aircraft, aircraft parts and labor. This bill will force us to hangar our aircraft out of state and literally put us out of business in Connecticut. It's just that simple and devastating. All the other aircraft here in our facility would simply leave and we would be left with the little old aircraft that sit day after day flying very little, and our smaller airports would die very shortly thereafter.

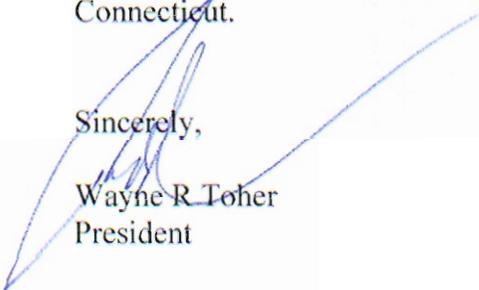
We understand the State needs money; everyone does after this last severe recession. The State will simply have to tighten its belt along with the rest of us. We have learned

our lesson. Is the state ready to lose us, our competitors, most of our Connecticut aircraft, 20 million gallons of fuel sales and the jobs?

Airplanes fly from state to state, to and from the United States. Why should Connecticut aircraft be taxed so unfairly just because we happen to base them here, maintain them here, and fuel them here. Interstate commerce is not taxable. All of us fought very hard to preserve our Airports including the City of Danbury as they will become more important than ever. Reliant had nearly 5000 enplanements or passengers here last year. Would you rather have those people on your roadways?

Thank you for your careful consideration and I know that you will make the correct decision and dismiss bill 6387, cut spending, just like all of us have to survive in Connecticut.

Sincerely,



Wayne R. Toher
President