

PO Box 5134
Helena, MT 59604
July 2, 2014

Glenda Wiles
Ravalli County Commission Assistant
215 S. 4th Street Suite A
Hamilton MT 59840

Subject: Ravalli County Airport

Dear Ms. Wiles:

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Ravalli County Commissioners

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I urge acceptance of the Environmental Assessment and expansion and modernization of the Ravalli County Airport. Having a modern airport creates jobs and promotes growth in the county. The airport brings many people to the county thus adding to the tax base and generating millions of dollars in economic value.

Ravalli County Airport contributes to the Hamilton and Ravalli County communities in many ways, some of which are: (1) Several heads of corporations use the airport to conduct business and to reach their homes in the Bitterroot Valley; (2) Choice Aviation brings tourists to the area to take tours of the back country; (3) Canyon Helicopters provides many farmers and ranchers in the county with agricultural spray services; (4) the airport personnel live and spend in the community; and, (5) aviation gasoline and mechanical services are available to itinerant pilots which circulates dollars in the local economy.

Some businesses that located to Ravalli County due to the beauty and amenities of the area may no longer be able to do business there if the runway isn't modernized or is closed. It is likely that they will take their businesses to a community with an accommodating airport thus reducing the tax base in Ravalli County.

The firefighting slurry bombers are important users of the Ravalli County Airport and protectors of the area. Currently, the load of retardant that they can carry is limited by the short length of the runway. Limiting the tanker aircraft loads slows the firefighting effort thus endangering residents and homes and creating more pollution due to particulate from the fires.

In summary, an airport is a great asset to a community and needs to be protected, maintained, and improved the same way county roads need to be maintained and improved. To make the Ravalli County Airport fully safe for all, a longer runway must be built and the flight path must be moved away from populated areas. Accepting the Environmental Assessment is essential for Ravalli County Airport to continue to serve the Hamilton and Ravalli County communities.

Sincerely yours,



Patricia B. Johnson
Private Pilot

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