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February 28, 2003

via email and electronic submission

Mr. Kevin Willis
Airport Safety Certification Specialist
Federal Aviation Administration
Room 619
800 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20591

Re: FAA Docket FAA-2003-14246
Airport Privatization Pilot Program
Notice of receipt of application –
New Orleans Lakefront Airport
New Orleans, Louisiana

Dear Mr. Willis:

The Board of Commissioners of the Orleans Levee District ("OLD") and American Airports Lakefront, LLC ("AAL") are eager to move forward with this important privatization project. The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association ("AOPA"), its members, the National Business Aviation Association, its members, tenants/users/employees at the airport and members of the general public have been on notice of the project for some three years, since the filing of and publication of the Preliminary Application in March of 2000.

The Joint Applicants have held multiple public formal/informal meetings and the Board's decision to approve the lease last year was the covered by the local television media and featured in the *Times Picayune*. All of the Special Airport Committee and Board decisions were subject to notice and all of them were taken at public meetings. It was, therefore, with some surprise that the Joint Applicants regarded the recent comments submitted to the docket contending that they were uninformed and unaware of the privatization efforts.

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While the Joint Applicants are anxious to avoid any unnecessary delay, they wish to move forward cooperatively with general aviation constituents, which are and will continue to be important clientele at the airport. Accordingly, the Joint Applicants support a further 60 day extension of the comment period (for a total of 120 days) and would agree to a public meeting in New Orleans to discuss the merits of the application.

It is evident from the responses that most commenters have not yet had the opportunity to review the materials that are on file and available to the public. Key items -- such as the exemplary qualifications of the private operator, the fact that the privatization statute *prohibits* the raising of fees to general aviation operators above the CPI, and the obligation of the public sponsor to continue operation of Lakefront Airport in the unlikely event of a default -- have obviously been overlooked.

Therefore, the Joint Applicants believe that an additional comment period and supplemental meeting would be beneficial for airport users to better understand the project and its many benefits.

Sincerely,

J. E. Murdock III
Alexander Van der Bellen
Counsel for the Joint Applicants

cc: David Bennett
AOPA

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