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Grassley-led Committee Hearing in Dubuque to Explore Aviation Needs, Alternative Fuels

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley will convene and lead a Finance Committee hearing in Dubuque on Monday to explore aviation needs in rural communities and rural America’s production of the alternative fuel that will help the nation meet its energy needs, including aviation.

“The Finance Committee is at a cross roads,” Grassley said. “Within the next two months, the committee will be responsible for the re-authorization of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, the tax provisions of the farm bill, and alternative fuels provisions in the energy bill. The committee will have the chance to influence the future of aviation policy, and much of that future will be discussed at the hearing.”

Grassley is ranking member and immediate past chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, which as the committee responsible for tax policy is charged with structuring the taxes that fund the federal aviation system. Congress is faced with re-authorizing the federal aviation system this year, including the taxes that fund the system. The committee also oversees any tax incentives for the production of alternative fuels and the infrastructure to deliver those alternative fuels to the American public. Grassley has been a long-time champion of such policy and has successfully passed a great deal of legislation to expand renewable energy production and use.

“America needs energy security, and rural America is willing to take on that responsibility,” Grassley said. “It will be our fields that grow the crops and our businesses that invest in technology for the next generation.”

The tax provisions of the farm bill, the energy bill, and the Airport and Airway Trust Fund will offer the unique opportunity to secure adequate investment and growth of the infrastructure needed to deliver the fuels of the future, Grassley said. A hearing witness from the U.S. Department of Agriculture will discuss many of the rural development programs devoted to boosting infrastructure. In addition, an Air Force witness will testify on the Air Force’s plans to fully certify all of its fleet -- both ground and air – for alternative fuels.

Grassley said he chose the Dubuque Regional Airport as the setting for the Finance Committee’s field hearing because he wants Washington, D.C., agency officials to see firsthand the

needs of a regional airport whose funding and successes are keenly affected by federal policy. The Dubuque Regional Airport has been active in its efforts to make sure it has the services – whether commercial, business, or general aviation – needed to meet community needs. The airport is also the home of the University of Dubuque’s aviation school.

The airport is poised to serve the business leaders of rural America, either by traditional commercial service, or new unique ownership structures or services such as ultra-light jets that are on the cutting edge of alternative jet fuel technology. Dubuque is uniquely suited as a test market for jets that use alternative fuel, as it is located across the river from the plant poised to manufacture the first alternative jet fuel to be derived from a combination of gasified coal and switch grass.

The hearing, “Airfields and Alternative Fuels: Exploring Rural America’s Transportation Infrastructure,” will be held on Monday, August 27, 2007, at 10 a.m. Central Time, at Dubuque Regional Airport, 11000 Airport Road, Dubuque. A witness list follows here.

UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member

Hearing

“Airfields and Alternative Fuels: Exploring Rural America’s Transportation Infrastructure”

Monday, August 27, 2007, at 10 a.m. Central Time

Dubuque Regional Airport
General Aviation/Dubuque Jet Center
11000 Airport Road, Dubuque, Iowa

Witness List

A Panel Consisting Of:

Mr. Kevin W. Billings, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health, United States Department of the Air Force, Washington, DC

Mr. Carl O. Bauer, Director, National Energy Technology Laboratory, United States Department of Energy, Pittsburgh, PA

The Honorable Thomas C. Dorr, Under Secretary for Rural Development, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC

Mr. Bruce W. Heine, Director, Government and Media Affairs, Magellan Midstream Partners, Tulsa, OK

Mr. Steven R. Accinelli, Chairperson, Dubuque Regional Airport Commission, Director, Aviation Programs, University of Dubuque, Dubuque, Iowa

Dr. Bruce J. Holmes, Director, Aeronautics Research, DayJet Corporation, Boca Raton, FL