



The Office of The Board of Granite County Commissioners

P.O. Box 925, Philipsburg, MT 59858

Telephone: 406-859-7023

E-mail: Commissioner@co.granite.mt.us | Website www.granitecountymt.us

Scott Adler, Commissioner
750 Frontage Road West
Drummond, MT 59823

Blanche McLure, Commissioner
P.O. Box 73
Philipsburg, MT 59858

Paul Kulaski, Chairperson
661 Upper Rock Creek Rd
Philipsburg, MT 59858

January 27, 2026

Brad Schuster, C.M. Northwest Mountain Region Manager, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association

Tim Robertson, President, Montana Pilots Association

AOPA
421 Aviation Way
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Mr. Schuster and Mr. Robertson,

This letter is to formally address concerns regarding the recent decision made by the Granite County Commissioners concerning airport operations.

First, please be advised that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has been notified of this decision, and direct communication has already taken place. As this is a county-owned airport, the Granite County Commissioners—acting as the governing authority of the County—made this decision during a properly noticed public meeting, in accordance with Montana law. Specifically, the decision was lawfully made pursuant to MCA 67-10-301 (2025).

As a result of this action, Granite County has reduced its potential liability exposure, as night landings are no longer permitted except in emergency situations. The County will, within a reasonably timely manner, work toward adopting an ordinance or resolution to establish clear protocols for emergency night landings and related operational matters.

With respect to potential reimbursement of grant funds, it is our understanding that neither the FAA, related to the preliminary engineering grant, nor the State of Montana, related to the beacon grant, is seeking reimbursement. The beacon is expected to remain available for emergency use, including periods of reduced visibility during daylight hours. Additionally, the FAA has consistently indicated that the County retained final decision-making authority upon completion of the preliminary engineering phase. Nothing in the prior planning process restricted or diminished the County Commission's current authority to make this decision.

Ultimately, this airport belongs to the people of Granite County. The County Commission has a responsibility to listen to its residents and to act in accordance with their concerns and interests. Those community voices were a central consideration in this decision and will continue to guide the Commission moving forward.

Sincerely,

Board of Granite County Commissioners



Chairperson, Paul G. Kulaski



Commissioner, Blanche McLure



Commissioner, Scott C. Adler