

It amazes me that, in these times, the City of Pittsfield thinks the best infrastructure project is expanding the Pittsfield Airport. This seems to me to be a project to take government money and give it to the friends of the politicians – and to take money away from the citizens of Pittsfield.

Are the people of Pittsfield aware that the Airport is not self-supporting? Our taxes go annually to pay, from what I can tell, about half the normal operating cost of the Airport. Will the amount we pay go up as the Airport has much more land, runway, and other infrastructural “improvements” to take care of each year? Has any cost/benefit analysis been done that takes us, the citizens who are forced to contribute each year, into account?

At the same time that the airport will be needing more of our tax dollars to operate each year, the Airport Commission has taken properties with a value of about \$4.5 million off the tax rolls through their “takings” for the proposed airport expansion. That leaves fewer of us sharing the tax burden of this airport.

Perhaps these corporations could save some money, and hopefully some local jobs, cutting their expenses by using their corporate jets less – or not at all. We have an international airport less than an hour away.

The Pittsfield Airport costs all the citizens of Pittsfield financially every year. Additionally, we pay the price of pollution going into our air and water from the jet fuel and the noise of these aircraft. And now we will lose rare species and wetlands as well.

With the incoming federal administration proposing a great amount of federal money directed toward infrastructure projects, I would think the citizens of Pittsfield would benefit most from the money being spent on our roads, bridges, and public transportation. Could you imagine the money being spent on a project that improves safety and convenience for everyone who drives on South Street in Pittsfield? Or repair of the mall connector road? Or repair of a retaining wall that is in danger of falling into Route 2? All projects as ready to go as the proposed airport expansion.

Instead the officials think the expansion of the Pittsfield Airport is the most important transportation infrastructure project? Or can the money be put to use on the infrastructure of our schools? Making our public buildings more energy efficient? That would benefit the taxpayers by producing lower annual costs, rather than the airport; a project that will cost the taxpayers of Pittsfield more every year.

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