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AGENDA
TUOLUMNE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AIRPORTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
May 19, 2025
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

LOCATION:
48 Yaney Ave, Sonora, CA
Third Floor Conference Room- Public Works-3A

This Airports Advisory Committee meeting will be available to the public via in-person attendance only at the above physical address.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

3. PUBLIC FORUM

The public may speak on any item, not on the printed agenda. No Action may be taken by the committee. The amount of time allocated for the public forum is limited to 15 minutes total.

4. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS
    a. Proposed airport fee increases options and support waiving the first reading of an ordinance amending Section 3.40.010(T) of the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code Related to increasing airport fees.

5. STAFF / COMMITTEE REPORTS

6. NEXT MEETING – June 9, 2025, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM, 48 Yaney Ave, Sonora, CA, Third Floor Conference Room- Public Works-3A

7. ADJOURNMENT

COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE CALIFORNIA

Department of Public Works

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TO: Airport Advisory Committee Members

FROM: Tonya Scheftner, P.G., Airport Manager
Blossom Scott-Heim, P.E., Director

DATE: May 19, 2025

RE: Airport Fee Increases

REQUESTED ACTION

Consideration of reviewing three proposed airport fee increase options and making a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Per Board direction, an Airport Feasibility and Viability Study (Study) was commissioned in November 2022 to provide an assessment of the airport system within Tuolumne County. The Study was made up of an overall assessment of Pine Mountain Lake Airport which included:

- A review of airport properties;
- An inventory of airport infrastructure;
- An evaluation of the airport's ability to be included in the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS);
- The airport's economic impact on the local economy; and
- An airport aeronautical market rent study.

In addition, components of Columbia Airport were analyzed, including:

- The airport's economic impact on the local economy; and
- An airport aeronautical market rent study.

The Study was presented to, and accepted by, the Board on December 3, 2024. **While the Study made several immediate, short-term, and long-term recommendations, we will concentrate on rent study recommendations today.**

MARKET RENT

A primary reason for performing the Study was to assess the airport's financial independence and the economic impact of the airports. The Study made many recommendations, including implementing market-based aeronautical rental rates for certain land and improvements based on the rent study. The County currently owns and leases 83 hangars at Columbia Airport and five hangars at Pine Mountain Lake Airport, along with multiple tiedown spaces at both airports.

Recommended hangar and tie-down fee percentage increases at Columbia Airport generally range from 3% to 25%, with the largest recommended fee percentage increase at 109%. Pine Mountain Lake Airport hangar and tie-down recommended fee percentage increases range between 4% and 14%. Airport staff requests that the Airport Advisory Committee review and provide input on three proposed fee increase options (Option 1, Option 2, and Option 3) detailed in the attached Tuolumne County Airports – Aeronautical Rent Study Fee Scenarios & Recommended Fee Increase packet to be considered for implementation and passed on to airport tenants.

Based on the recommended hangar fee increase options, Columbia Airport's increased revenue for Option 1 (Immediate Full Increase, with no CPI) is projected to generate approximately $32,904 additional revenue annually, Option 2 (Two-Year Phased Increase with yearly CPI adjustments) would generate approximately $21,312 in Year 1 and $21,828 by Year 2, and Option 3 (Three-Year Graduated Increase with yearly CPI adjustments) would yield an estimated $21,996 in Year 1, $19,032 in Year 2, and $16,332 in Year 3. As noted in Option 3, the annual increase in hangar revenue decreases each year because the largest portion of the rate correction is implemented in the first two years. The estimated annual increases do not include tie-downs.

Based on the recommended hangar fee increase options, Pine Mountain Lake Airport approximate increased revenue for Option 1 (Immediate Full Increase, with no CPI) is projected to generate approximately $1,176 additional revenue annually, Option 2 (Two-Year Phased Increase with CPI each year) would generate approximately $1,272 in Year 1 and $1,308 by Year 2, and Option 3 (Three-Year Graduated Increase with CPI Adjustments) would yield an estimated $1,884 in Year 1, $720 in Year 2, and $744 in Year 3. Compared to Columbia Airport, all units receive a modest, consistent increase phased over the first year, compounding slightly. Pine Mountain Lake Airport has rates closer to market value. The estimated annual increases do not include tie-downs.

The Study recommends tie-down fee increases at Columbia Airport of $9.00 for single-engine aircraft and $16.00 for twin-engine aircraft, and at Pine Mountain Lake Airport of $10.00 and $11.00, respectively. However, airport staff does not recommend implementing tie-down fees increases at this time.

Additional fees charged by the airport will be brought to the AAC at a later date.

RECOMMENDATION

Airport Staff recommend that the Airport Advisory Committee review three proposed airport fee increase options and make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

Tuolumne County Airports – Aeronautical Rent Study Fee Scenarios & Recommended Fee Increase Packet

Tuolumne County operates two public use airports—Columbia Airport (O22) and Pine Mountain Lake Airport (E45)—which play a critical role in supporting general aviation, wildfire response, emergency services, tourism, and the local economy. Maintaining and improving these facilities requires consistent investment and a financially stable operating model.

In December 2024, the County commissioned the *Airport Feasibility and Viability Study for Pine Mountain Lake Airport and Columbia Airport* (2024 Study) to evaluate long-term operational and financial health of both airports. The 2024 Study concluded that current revenues for hangar rentals are below fair market value, and an increase is needed to cover ongoing operational costs and to prepare for future needs.

The County acknowledges that deferred maintenance exists at both airports due to years of underfunding. With the revenue improvements proposed in this packet, Tuolumne County intends to begin addressing these issues in a responsible and transparent manner.

The following pages summarize the updated rate structure proposed in the 2024 Study, with three options provided for review and discussion. The options are intended to provide several different ways in which fees can be adjusted to reach the 2024 Study recommendations and incorporate Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases to account for inflation. CPI is currently applied to rental fees using the rate of the San Francisco region, all urban consumers, Consumer Price Index (CPI), measured from December to December and applied each successive July.

Option 1 includes a 100% fee increase in year one, with CPI delayed until year two. Option 2 is a two-year phased fee increase, with CPI applied with each phase. Option 3 is a graduated fee increase plan of no more than 10% of proposed fee adjustments per year for the first two years and including CPI, followed by a remaining adjustment plus CPI in the year three.

Tuolumne County Airports – Aeronautical Rent Study Fee Scenarios & Recommended Fee Increase Packet

Table 1 and Table 2 below summarize the recommended 2024 Study rental rate conclusions for Columbia Airport and Pine Mountain Lake Airport:

Table 1. Recommended Rental Rate Conclusions – Columbia Airport

Component	Identification	Size (SF)	Current Fee Monthly	Recommended Fee Monthly	Total Increase Monthly (Dollars)
Small T-Hangar	Row A – E	784	$188.00	$235.00	$47.00
	Row F – G	960	$267.00	$290.00	$23.00
	Row J – K	992	$312.00	$302.50	($10.00)
Executive Hangar	Row I	2,800	$875.00	$1,097.00	$222.00
	Row I - Courtney	2,800	$1,070.00	$1,097.00	$27.00
Portable T-Hangar	Port-a-Port	809	$79.00	$165.00	$86.00
Box Hangar	Fickel Box	2,500	$469.00	$667.00	$198.00
Tie-downs	Single engine	N/A	$64.00	$73.00	$9.00
	Twin-engine		$79.00	$95.00	$16.00

Table 2. Recommended Rental Rate Conclusions – Pine Mountain Lake Airport

Component	Identification	Size (SF)	Current Fee Monthly	Recommended Fee Monthly	Total Increase Monthly (Dollars)
Executive Hangar	Hangar 1	1,512	$501.00	$523.00	$22.00
	Hangar 2	1,512	$501.00	$523.00	$22.00
	Hangar 3	1,440	$480.00	$498.00	$18.00
	Hangar 4	1,440	$480.00	$498.00	$18.00
	Hangar 5	1,440	$480.00	$498.00	$18.00
Tie-downs	Single engine	N/A	$64.00	$70.00	$6.00
	Twin-engine		$79.00	$90.00	$11.00

Tuolumne County Airports – Aeronautical Rent Study Fee Scenarios & Recommended Fee Increase Packet

Option 1: 100% Fee Increase Year One, CPI Begins Year Two (2026)

Table 3. Columbia Airport Option 1:

Component	Identification	Qty	Current Fee Monthly	Recommended Fee Monthly	Year One Total Increase Monthly (Dollars)	Year Two Total Increase Monthly Estimated with CPI[2] (Dollars)
Small T-Hangar	Row A – E	25	$188.00	$235.00	$47.00	$240.00
	Row F – G	16	$267.00	$290.00	$23.00	$296.00
	Row J – K	28	$312.00	$312.00[1]	$0.00	$319.00
Executive Hangar	Row I	4	$875.00	$1,097.00	$222.00	$1,123.00
	Row I - Courtney	1	$1,070.00	$1,097.00	$27.00	$1,123.00
Portable T-Hangar	Port-a-Port	1	$79.00	$165.00	$86.00	$168.00
Box Hangar	Fickel Box	1	$469.00	$667.00	$198.00	$683.00
Tie-downs	Single engine	16*	$64.00	$73.00	$9.00	$75.00
	Twin-engine	1*	$79.00	$95.00	$16.00	$97.00

1 = The County will hold the rate steady year 1 with no CPI adjustment applied. This approach acknowledges the current rate's position above market while preserving revenue stability.
2 = CPI is an estimated placeholder using the previous years CPI.
*Based on current number rented
Note: There are 94 total single engine and 6 total twin engine tie-downs

Columbia Airport Option 1: Immediate 100% Fee Increase, CPI Adjustments Begin in 2026

This option proposes a one-time increase to 100% of the recommended monthly fee reported in the 2024 Study (Table 1) to all hangar and tie-downs effective in year one. The fees would remain fixed through 2025, with no additional adjustments. Beginning in 2026, annual fee adjustments would resume based on the CPI to account for inflation and maintain long-term financial sustainability.

Under this option, Columbia Airport's annual hangar revenue is projected to **increase from $273,912 to approximately $306,816– reflecting a projected gain of $32,904 in year one.** <u>Tie-down revenue is not included in this estimate.</u>

Option 1: 100% Fee Increase Year One, CPI Begins 2026

Table 4. PML Airport Option 1:						
Component	Identification	Qty	Current Fee Monthly	Year One Recommended Fee Monthly	Total Increase Monthly (Dollars)	Year Two Total Increase Monthly Estimated with CPI[2] (Dollars)
Executive Hangar	Hangar 1	1	$501.00	$523.00	$22.00	$535.00
	Hangar 2	1	$501.00	$523.00	$22.00	$535.00
	Hangar 3	1	$480.00	$498.00	$18.00	$509.00
	Hangar 4	1	$480.00	$498.00	$18.00	$509.00
	Hangar 5	1	$480.00	$498.00	$18.00	$509.00
Tie-downs	Single engine	5*	$64.00	$70.00	$6.00	$71.00
	Twin-engine	0*	$79.00	$90.00	$11.00	$72.00

*Based on current number rented

Pine Mountain Lake Airport Option 1: Immediate 100% Fee Increase, CPI Adjustments Begin in 2026

This option proposes a one-time increase to 100% of the recommended monthly fee reported in the 2024 Study (Table 2) to all hangar and tie-downs effective in year one. The fees would remain fixed through 2025, with no additional adjustments. Beginning in 2026, annual fee adjustments would resume based on the CPI to account for inflation and maintain long-term financial sustainability.

Under this option, Pine Mountain Lake Airport's annual hangar revenue is projected to **increase from $29,304 to approximately $30,480 – reflecting a projected gain of $1,176 in year one.** Tie-down revenue is not included in this estimate.

Option 2: Two-Year Phased Fee Increase, CPI Applied with Each Phase

Table 5. Columbia Airport Option 2:

Component	Identification	Qty	Current Fee Monthly	Year 1 Fee Monthly (50% of Fee plus 2.4% CPI[1])	Year 2 Fee Monthly (50% of Fee plus 2.4% CPI[2])
Small T-Hangar	Row A – E	25	$188.00	$216.00	$245.00
	Row F – G	16	$267.00	$285.00	$303.00
	Row J – K	28	$312.00	$314.00	$316.00
Executive Hangar	Row I	4	$875.00	$1,009.00	$1,146.00
	Row I - Courtney	1	$1,070.00	$1,109.00	$1,149.00
	Fickel Box	1	$469.00	$581.00	$696.00
Portable T-Hangar	Port-a-Port	1	$79.00	$124.00	$171.00
Tie-downs	Single engine	16*	$64.00	$70.00	$76.00
	Twin-engine	1*	$79.00	$89.00	$99.00

1 CPI effective 2025, based on Consumer Price Index, San Francisco Area – December 2024: Western Information Office, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
2. CPI is an estimated placeholder using the previous year CPI.
*Based on current number rented
Note: There are 94 total single engine and 6 total twin engine tie-downs

Columbia Airport Option 2: Two-Year Phased Fee Increase, CPI Adjustments Applied with Each Phase.

This option proposes a two-year phased approach, with fees for all hangar and tie-downs increased each of the two years by 50% of the recommended monthly fee reported in the 2024 Study (Table 1) with CPI added on a compounded basis for each year. Beginning in 2027, the annual fee adjustments would resume based on the CPI to account for inflation and maintain long-term financial sustainability.

Under this option, year one annual hangar revenue is projected to **increase from $273,912 to approximately $295,224 – reflecting a projected gain of $21,312.** Year two annual hangar revenue is project **to increase from $295,224 to $317,052– reflecting an additional projected gain of $21,828.** <u>Tie-down revenue is not included in this estimate.</u>

CPI is applied to each year's updated rate, meaning the inflation adjustment compounds annually. As each 50% phase of the proposed fee increase is implemented, CPI is applied to the new total rather than the original base rate. This approach results in a greater year-over-year gain. For example, year one hangar revenue is projected to increase by $21,312, while year two revenue is projected to grow by $21,828. This additional gain reflects not only the second half of the phased increase but also the effect of CPI compounding on top of the already adjusted year one rates. Note: The CPI rate for 2026 is an estimate and may be adjusted.

Option 2: Two-Year Phased Fee Increase, CPI Applied with Each Phase

Table 6. Pine Mountain Lake Airport Option 2:

Component	Identification	Qty	Current Fee Monthly	Year 1 Fee Monthly (50% of Fee plus 2.4% CPI[1])	Year 2 Fee Monthly (50% of Fee plus 2.4% CPI[2])
Executive Hangar	Hangar 1	1	$501.00	$524.00	$547.00
	Hangar 2	1	$501.00	$524.00	$547.00
	Hangar 3	1	$480.00	$500.00	$521.00
	Hangar 4	1	$480.00	$500.00	$521.00
	Hangar 5	1	$480.00	$500.00	$521.00
Tie-downs	Single engine	5*	$64.00	$70.00	$74.00
	Twin-engine	0*	$79.00	$86.00	$95.00

1 CPI effective 2025, based on Consumer Price Index, San Francisco Area – December 2024: Western Information Office, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
2. CPI is an estimated placeholder using the previous year's CPI.
*Based on current number rented

Pine Mountain Lake Airport Option 2: Two-Year Phased Fee Increase, CPI Applied Each Phase

This option proposes a two-year approach, with fees for all hangar and tie-downs increased each of the two years by 50% of the recommended monthly fee reported in the 2024 Study (Table 2) with CPI added on a compounded basis for each year. Beginning in 2027, the annual fee adjustments would resume based on the CPI to account for inflation and maintain long-term financial sustainability.

Under this option, Year One annual hangar revenue is projected to **increase from $29,304 to approximately $30,576– reflecting a projected gain of $1,272.** Year two annual hangar revenue is project **to increase from $30,576 to $31,884 – reflecting an additional projected gain of $1,308.** <u>Tie-down revenue is not included in this estimate.</u>

As discussed above, CPI is applied to each year's updated rate, meaning the inflation adjustment compounds annually. As each 50% phase of the proposed fee increase is implemented, CPI is applied to the new total rather than the original base rate. This approach results in a greater year-over-year gain.

Option 3: Graduated Fee Increase Plan – Phased Adjustment Up to 10% of total Percentage Increase + CPI in Years 1 and 2, Remaining Adjustment + CPI in Year 3

To help lesson the immediate impact on tenants, the proposed fee adjustments below are structured to be more gradual over time. Instead of applying the full recommended increase all at once or in two phases as proposed in Options 1 and 2, we have broken it into smaller steps – applying up to 10% of the total percentage increase reported in the 2024 Study (Tables 1 and 2) in each of the first two years (plus CPI), followed by the remaining portion in the third year (plus CPI), if applicable. CPI is compounded annually, meaning each year's adjustment builds on the previous year's total. This phased approach allows for better financial planning for airport tenants while still moving toward fair market value.

At Columbia Airport, most recommended hangar fee percentage increases range from 3% to 25%, with the largest recommended fee percentage increase at 109%. Hangar Row F, Hangar Row G, and Hangar Row I – Courtney, would be caught up to fair market value within Year 1 with an estimated CPI of 2.4% applied in Year 2 and Year 3. Year 3 for the Port-a-Port and Fickel Box Hangar reflect more aggressive increases, 109% and 42%, respectively, because these units were historically priced well below market value. While the general phased model applies a maximum annual increase of 10% of recommended percentage increase + CPI these two units require a larger correction in Year 3 (89% and 22% respectively) to bring them in line with fair market rates.

While some hangars (Row J and Row K) appear to exceed the updated fair market value estimated at $302.00, the rates were not reduced for several important reasons:

1. Consistency and Simplicity: Reducing rents for certain tenants while increasing the rent for others could create confusion.
2. Revenue Stability: Even modest reductions would lead to a loss in annual revenue during a time when the airport is working toward financial self-sufficiency and long-term capital planning.
3. Administrative Efficiency: Adjusting rates downward for a small subset of tenants would introduce additional administrative burden.
4. Market Fluctuation Cushion: The small difference between $312 and $302 is within a reasonable margin and provides a cushion against future CPI increases, ensuring those tenants' rates do not exceed market value within the next adjustment cycle.

Option 3: Graduated Fee Increase Plan – Phased Adjustment Up to 10% of Recommended Increase + CPI in Years 1 and 2, Remaining Adjustment + CPI in Year 3

Table 7. Columbia Airport Option 3:

Component	Identification	Qty	Current Fee Monthly	Recommended Fee Monthly	Total Recommended Percentage Increase	Year 1 Fee Monthly (Up to 10% plus 2.4% CPI[1])	Year 2 Fee Monthly (Up to 10% plus 2.4% CPI[2])	Year 3 Fee Monthly (Remaining % plus 2.4% CPI[2])
Small T-Hangar	Row A – E	25	$188.00	$235.00	25%	$211.00	$237.00	$254.00
	Row F – G	16	$267.00	$290.00	9%	$298.00	$305.00	$312.00
	Row J – K	28	$312.00	$302.50	-3%	$319.00	$327.00	$335.00
Executive Hangar	Row I	4	$875.00	$1,097.00	25%	$985.00	$1,109.00	$1,192.00
	Row I - Courtney	1	$1,070.00	$1,097.00	3%	$1,128.00	$1,155.00	$1,183.00
	Fickel Box	1	$469.00	$667.00	42%	$528.00	$594.00	$742.00
Portable T-Hangar	Port-a-Port	1	$79.00	$165.00	109%	$88.00	$99.00	$191.00
Tie-downs	Single engine	16*	$64.00	$73.00	14%	$72.00	$76.00	$77.00
	Twin-engine	1*	$79.00	$95.00	20%	$88.00	$99.00	$101.00

1 CPI effective 2025, based on Consumer Price Index, San Francisco Area – December 2024: Western Information Office, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
2. CPI is an estimated placeholder using the previous December 2024 year's CPI.
= Monthly fees with estimated CPI applied only
*Based on current number rented
Note: There are 94 total single engine and 6 total twin engine tie-downs

- **Year 1**
  - Projected Annual Revenue: $295,908
  - Increase from prior year: $21,996
- **Year 2**
  - Projected Annual Revenue: $314,940
  - Increase from prior year: $19,032
- **Year 3**
  - Projected Annual Revenue: $331,272
  - Increase from prior year: $16,332

As noted in the Graduated Fee Increase Plan, the annual increase in hangar revenue decreases each year. This occurs because the largest portion of the rate correction is implemented in the first two years. As hangar rates approach fair market targets, the remaining adjustments become incrementally smaller.

Note: Projected Annual Revenue does not include tie-downs.

- **Option 3: Graduated Fee Increase Plan – Phased Adjustment Up to 10% of Recommended Increase + CPI in Years 1 and 2, Remaining Adjustment + CPI in Year 3**

Table 8. Pine Mountain Lake Airport Option 3:

Component	Identification	Qty	Current Fee Monthly	Recommended Fee Monthly	Total Recommended Percentage Increase	Year 1 Fee Monthly (Up to 10% plus 2.4% CPI[1])	Year 2 Fee Monthly (Up to 10% plus 2.4% CPI[2])	Year 3 Fee Monthly (Remaining % plus 2.4% CPI[2])
Executive Hangar	Hangar 1	1	$501.00	$523.00	4%	$533.00	$545.00	$558.00
	Hangar 2	1	$501.00	$523.00	4%	$533.00	$545.00	$558.00
	Hangar 3	1	$498.00	$498.50	4%	$511.00	$523.00	$535.00
	Hangar 4	1	$498.00	$498.00	4%	$511.00	$523.00	$535.00
	Hangar 5	1	$498.00	$498.00	4%	$511.00	$523.00	$535.00
Tie-downs	Single engine	5*	$64.00	$70.00	9%	$71.00	$72.00	$73.00
	Twin-engine	0*	$79.00	$90.00	14%	$88.00	$93.00	$95.00

1 CPI effective 2025, based on Consumer Price Index, San Francisco Area – December 2024: Western Information Office, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
2. CPI is an estimated placeholder using the previous December 2024 year's CPI.
= Monthly fees with estimated CPI applied only
*Based on current number rented

- **Year 1**
  - Projected Annual Revenue: $31,188
  - Increase from prior year: $1,884
- **Year 2**
  - Projected Annual Revenue: $31,908
  - Increase from prior year: $720
- **Year 3**
  - Projected Annual Revenue: $32,652
  - Increase from prior year: $744

Compared to Columbia, all units received a modest, consistent increase (~4%) phased over the first year and CPI is added each year, compounding slightly. Pine Mountain Lake airport has rates that are generally closer to market value.