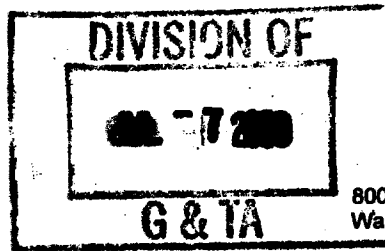




U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

*Fit.
Plan
Letter*

Director of Air Traffic



800 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20591

JUL 5 2000

Ms. Melissa Bailey
Director, Air Traffic Services
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
421 Aviation Way
Frederick, MD 21701-4798

Dear Ms. Bailey:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) recent decision to require domestic use of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Flight Plan.

The FAA is committed to furthering international harmonization and working with neighboring air traffic service providers to achieve as seamless an air traffic control environment for system users as practical. While this course is being pursued in part because of our international agreements, our primary objective is to achieve increased National Airspace System efficiencies which will ultimately benefit all stakeholders.

The move to the ICAO flight planning convention is not being taken lightly, and we understand the potential impacts this will have on the general aviation pilot community. An activity involving the user community will begin soon to gain input as we proceed toward the stated objectives. The Multi-Agency Air Traffic Services Procedures Co-Ordination Group Technical Working Group's efforts in developing the Universal Flight Plan format will be an important source of information as we try to mitigate the impact to all stakeholders. However, we do not currently plan to implement the Universal Flight Plan as finalized due to technical and training issues.

Advances in navigation and communication capabilities, such as data link, have stressed to the limit our current flight planning practices for describing surveillance, communication, navigation, and approach aid capabilities. We need a more flexible and widely accepted method such as the ICAO convention provides. The use of the ICAO flight planning standards for international flights, and a separate standard for domestic flights to describe these capabilities, are inconsistencies that must be overcome. The use of the proposed Universal Flight Plan would allow this inconsistency to continue.

While sole use of the Universal Flight Plan form would reduce impact to the general aviation pilot community, it would require a change for those already familiar with the ICAO compliant form used by the FAA for international flights. This would represent a move away from the seamless environment we are committed to.

As we investigate ways of minimizing the impact on all stakeholders, we look forward to continuing to work with the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association to address issues particular to the general aviation pilot community.

We trust this has satisfactorily addressed your concerns. If we may be of further assistance, please contact Jeff Griffith, Program Director for Air Traffic Planning and Procedures, ATP-1, at (202) 267-9155.

Sincerely,

Maureen Woods
for Ronald E. Morgan
Director of Air Traffic