



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

Don Young
Chairman

James L. Oberstar
Ranking Democratic Member

October 28, 2005

Lloyd A. Jones, Chief of Staff
Elizabeth Megginson, Chief Counsel

David Heymfeld, Democratic Chief of Staff

The Honorable Marion Blakey
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

RE: Request for Public Comment Period Extension and Public Meetings on Proposed Rule Regarding Washington, DC Metropolitan Area Special Flight Rules Area

Dear Administrator Blakey:

We write at this time regarding the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) entitled "Washington, DC Metropolitan Area Special Flight Rules Area," Docket No., AA-2004-17005. First, we urge the FAA to extend the public comment period for 60-days and to conduct one or more public meeting on its NPRM. Second, we request that if the FAA decides to go forward with making the temporary flight restrictions permanent, that it set forth in the rule the conditions under which the restrictions could be immediately lifted and the process for doing so.

The NPRM proposes to make permanent all of the flight restrictions that currently exist in the National Capital Region (NCR), including the requirements relating to the Washington area Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). In the past, it has been the FAA's policy to hold public meetings on significant airspace actions to gather facts and information relevant to a planned rulemaking action. We believe that convening public meetings is an essential step before issuing any final rule, especially important airspace restriction proposals, such as the current NPRM.

Additionally, we recommend that the FAA invite Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials to attend these public meetings to facilitate a better understanding of the operational challenges caused by the ADIZ. Reviewing written comments alone will not allow the FAA and other Federal Security Officials a full opportunity to pose questions and explore alternatives.

Administrator Blakey

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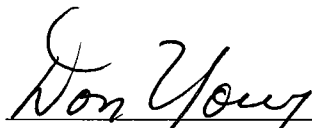
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If, at the end of the full public review and meeting process, the FAA decides to make the NCR airspace restrictions permanent, we would urge the FAA to include, as part of any final rule, the conditions under which the restrictions could be lifted.

There is a real concern about the need for and utility of such wide-sweeping flight restrictions. As such, it seems very reasonable for the FAA and DHS to clearly identify the conditions that would allow the removal of the restrictions and a process for lifting the restrictions immediately.

Again, we urge you to follow your established policy by scheduling public meetings with aviation and security officials as soon as possible and prior to issuing any final rule. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Coon or Holly Woodruff Lyons of the Aviation Subcommittee Majority Staff at (202) 226-3220, or Stacie Soumbeniotis of the Aviation Subcommittee Minority Staff at (202) 225-9161. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



DON YOUNG

Chairman

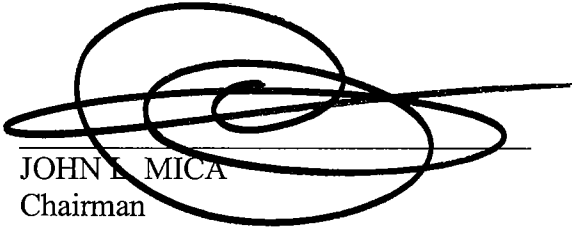
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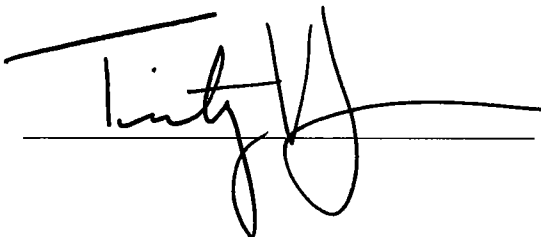
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