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RICK LARSEN
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Congress of the United States
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February 11, 2004

Honorable Marion C. Blakey
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Blakey:

I am writing today with regard to an important issue to the citizens of the state of Washington that affects air transportation in the Puget Sound region. A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), created on October 22, 2003, would require all air tour operators, with an exception of certain charitable and community events, to be certified under Part 119 and require that their operations come into compliance with Part 135 regulations.

In lieu of this proposal, I respectfully request a reevaluation of this NPRM to determine the accuracy of the FAA's analysis concerning these restrictions as well as request that the FAA conduct formal public hearings with the intention that the administration can hear first-hand from general aviation pilots and small aviation businesses that will be adversely impacted by this proposal.

The NPRM proposed by the FAA would likely drive a number of small sightseeing businesses out of the industry as well as limit the number of pilots able to participate along side local charities with fundraising flights. This proposal would cause considerable operational and efficiency challenges to many private pilots and small businesses and will undoubtedly force some companies out of business. For example, the proposal will create significant setbacks to private pilots by imposing an increase in the minimum number of hours required for private pilots conducting charity fundraising flights from 200 to 500 hours of flight time. In addition, it will revoke an exemption that permits Part 91 sightseeing flights within 25 miles of the departure airport.

I understand the vital importance of securing our airspace and our country, but urge you to reexamine the NPRM and conduct formal hearings to allow general aviation pilots and small aviation businesses affected by this proposal an opportunity to be heard. I appreciate your leadership and efforts in enhancing the security of our nation's airspace and thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Rick Larsen
U.S. Representative
Washington State - 2nd District