



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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**Phil Boyer**

President

October 26, 2005

Mr. Michael Jackson  
Homeland Security  
400 Seventh Street, SW  
Room 10200  
Washington, DC 20590 Washington, DC

Dear Deputy <sup>Michael</sup> Secretary Jackson:

I am writing on behalf of the more than 405,000 members of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) regarding the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) entitled "Washington DC Metropolitan Area Special Flight Rules Area," Docket No. FAA-2004-17005. The NPRM proposes to make permanent all of the flight restrictions that currently exist in the Washington, DC area including requirements relating to the Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ).

AOPA has formally requested that the FAA conduct public meetings on this rulemaking.

**Should the FAA conduct these meetings, and we have every reason to expect they will, we ask that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) participate.**

I am writing this to you rather than Kip Hawley, Assistant Secretary Transportation Security Administration because of the numerous DHS agencies involved in the Washington-area airspace security.

**The National Capital Region airspace has gone through significant changes to address heightened security in the past 4 years ...**

You are well aware of this fact from your service at the Department of Transportation and now at DHS. After the initial grounding following the events on 9/11, one of the major initiatives was the February 2003 temporary establishment of the Washington DC ADIZ. Of course, it never went away which is important because the dimensions of the ADIZ are quite large, covering more than 19 public use airports, over 10,000 pilots, 2,655 aircraft, and accounting for over 1 million operations per year. It stretches from the tip of West Virginia, across the Chesapeake Bay to Maryland's Eastern Shore, north beyond Baltimore and south to just outside of Fredericksburg, Virginia. At its widest point, the ADIZ is 90-miles across.

Mr. Michael Jackson

Page 2

October 28, 2005

**The Washington DC ADIZ has raised numerous problems for pilots, air traffic controllers and businesses that have never been addressed ...**

Anytime pilots are operating in the ADIZ, they must file a flight plan, obtain a discrete transponder code and maintain 2-way radio contact with air traffic controllers. For air traffic controllers, their workload has more than doubled, and even quadrupled on nice weather weekend days. The air traffic control system is being required to perform a function for which it was not designed and for which it lacks capacity. In addition, small businesses dependent on providing services to pilots of light aircraft in the Washington DC area are losing nearly \$30 million a year. Jobs have been lost, flight schools have closed, and many pilots have either stopped flying or moved their aircraft out of the area.

**The value and effectiveness of the ADIZ have been questioned ...**

Reports from the Government Accountability Office and the Congressional Research Service have raised many issues relative to the continued need for this hastily crafted solution during a heightened security threat period, and note the negative impact on general aviation. Questions remain regarding available alternatives that maintain a balance of security without placing incredible burdens on the air traffic control system.

**The FAA has received over 13,000 comments from pilots on this proposal ...**

This is the largest number of individual comments from pilots to an FAA proposed rulemaking in over a quarter of a century. It is important that the FAA and the DHS agencies involved in security of the National Capitol Region fully understand the issues associated with the ADIZ. Participating in public meetings is an important part of this effort. Simply reviewing and responding to written comments does not afford the proper opportunity for questions, discussion, and the exploration of alternatives.

DHS has a significant stake in the outcome of this rule. It is imperative that security officials hear directly from members of the general aviation community and air traffic controllers about the practical difficulties and economic hardships caused by this highly restrictive airspace.

Sincerely,



Phil Boyer  
President

Enclosure

cc: Kip Hawley, Assistant Secretary, TSA