

Washington N.O.I.S.E. Watch

A Publication of National Organization to Insure a Sound Controlled Environment (NOISE). NOISE, an affiliate of the National League of Cities has served for over 37 years as America's only nation-wide, community based association composed of locally elected officials representing thousands of citizens across the United States committed to reducing the impact of aviation noise on local communities. (www.aviation-noise.org email: contact@aviation-noise.org)

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NOISE Policy Summit

The annual National Organization to Insure a Sound-Controlled Environment (NOISE) **Policy Summit** is being held Friday, November 16th in New Orleans at the National League of Cities 84th Annual Congress of Cities conference. The event will begin with a breakfast at 8:00 AM and a Federal Relations update and general discussion at 8:30 AM. The Congress of Cities is being held at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, and the policy summit will be in room 224. Also be sure to stop by the NOISE booth in the exhibit hall of the convention center from Nov. 14-16th. Visit aviation-noise.org for future NOISE events and updates.

FAA Extension

On September 24th, the House passed H.R. 3540, a 3-month extension of the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization allowing the administration to continue to collect fees and excise taxes until the final reauthorization bill is completed. The Senate has yet to set any date for floor action on its version of the bill. Serious differences between the current versions of the House and Senate bills could make reconciling them difficult.

The House passed the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007 (HR 2881) on September 20th by a vote of 267 to 151. The bill reauthorizes the FAA at \$68 billion over four years.

On September 19th, the White House released a statement threatening to veto the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 2881), unless major changes were made in the fees and taxes used to pay for air traffic control system upgrades. The Administration stated that the bill "falls far short of providing critical reforms proposed by the administration. Indeed, it would make the status quo worse by undoing progress achieved in prior Congresses." The bill was amended to include a measure to pay for the upgrades with an increased per gallon fuel tax of 24.1 cents (up from the previous 19.3 cents), the Administration has proposed a per-flight fee based on distance traveled in an effort to more directly tie the costs of the system to its various users.

The Administration's proposal is backed by the airline industry who charge that general aviation doesn't carry its share of the air traffic control costs. General aviation interests favor the current system and claim that the administration's proposal would simply be a form of corporate welfare.

The Administration has also expressed concern over the bill's mandated negotiation and possible arbitration between the FAA and the air traffic controllers union.

NOISE Salutes Oberstar

In a recent release to national news sources, NOISE commended House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman James L. Oberstar (D-MN) for his leadership in passing the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 2881) Congressman Oberstar, the 2003

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recipient of the *NOISE Lifetime Achievement and Environmental Champion Award* has a long history of outstanding advocacy on behalf of American communities who deal with the adverse impacts of aviation noise. NOISE Legislative Committee Chair and Member of the Minneapolis City Council, Sandy Colvin Roy said, “The passage of this bill demonstrates Mr. Oberstar’s on-going commitment to noise issues and American communities. His record of support for these issues is unprecedented.” Additionally NOISE Executive Director, Dennis McGrann said of the bill, which contained many of the group’s top priorities, “This legislation is the biggest win in recent history for citizens and communities who deal with the adverse impacts of excessive aviation noise.”

Airport PFCs Increase

The House is considering a bill supported by airport advocacy groups that proposes an increase in Personal Facility Charges (PFCs) cap at airports across the nation. In the current version of the bill the cap would increase from \$4.50 to \$7 per airport. Airports say that this increase is necessary to fund runway expansions to decrease air congestion. Airlines have stated that they oppose the cap increase because it imposes unfair cost burdens on consumers and could reduce their resources. Only 58 percent of airports allowed to charge PFCs do so, but the cap increase would still generate up to \$1 billion in additional revenue.

Congressmen Nick Lampson (D-TX) and Ted Poe (R-TX) plan to offer an amendment to strike the PFC increase. Chairman James L. Oberstar (D-MN) of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and Ranking Member John Micah (R-FL) have stated their opposition to the amendment.

FAA Head Departs

FAA Administrator, Marion Blakey announced she will be leaving her position at the end of September to assume leadership of the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), the leading advocacy group for the aerospace industry. Administrator Blakey has come under increasing fire for many of the delays experienced at airports across the nation, especially in the New York City area. Sources have indicated that while the FAA contended that the delays were due to inadequate funding on the part of Congress, some law makers insist that the problems lie with the Administration

In a recent address Blakey recognized the need for airlines to take responsibility for overbooking flights and causing significant delays. Her remarks indicated a departure from previous position that did not place significant responsibility on the private airline corporations.

Contact NOISE at:

NOISE
415 Second Street NE
Suite 210
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 544-9844
Fax (202) 544-9850
Email contact@aviation-noise.org
Web www.aviation-noise.org