

NACA

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NACA Relays Concerns on Proposed DOT Consumer Rules

NACA met with White House Office of Management and Budget staff to express our concerns over proposed DOT rules regarding ancillary fee transparency and airline refunds. We maintained that the proposed ancillary fee transparency rule is unnecessary because ancillary products and services are clearly displayed on the websites of ultra-low-cost carriers (ULCCs) at each stage of the check-out process and prior to payment. With respect to airline refunds, we asserted that DOT's existing refund policy worked well during the pandemic, noting that ULCCs and other U.S. passenger carriers issued cash refunds at a faster clip than in 2019 despite 46 percent lower revenues. We warned that any modification of DOT's existing policy that would require airlines to issue more cash refunds would inevitably lead to higher fares for consumers.

RAA Leaders Conference Panel on FAA Reauthorization

On September 20, NACA Vice President for Government Affairs and ULCC Policy Chris Brown participated on a panel of current and former Capitol Hill staffers to discuss issues and prospects for the upcoming FAA reauthorization bill in 2023. Chris discussed the need for policymakers to address pilot supply challenges and to refrain from implementing new tax and regulatory mandates considering the industry's ongoing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. He also highlighted NACA's letter urging DOT Secretary Buttigieg to convene a stakeholder meeting to discuss the scope of the pilot supply problem and possible solutions.

FAA Administrator-Nominee Update

A confirmation hearing for Denver International Airport CEO Phil Washington, President Biden's nominee to be the next FAA administrator, is unlikely to occur before Congress leaves Washington next month for the November elections. Given an investigation into allegations concerning Mr. Washington, and the full congressional calendar for the fall, we expect acting FAA Administrator Billy Nolen will remain in his post at least until the end of the year.

Upcoming TSA Action on Cyber for Large Carriers

According to TSA, the larger carriers of the nation will need to meet upcoming cyber security performance standards to stay ahead of evolving threats potentially impacting the nation's critical infrastructure. CEO-level intelligence briefings have been held by the highest levels of government to explain why these additional steps are required in the proposed timeline. TSA is currently adjudicating comments submitted by carriers and associations with an expected final version to be issued in November.

TSA Outbound Explosive Screening Amendments

NACA is working closely with TSA cargo policy staff as they review potential changes to amendments governing the requirement to screen cargo for explosives. The Impracticable to Screen (ITS) and on-demand amendments, which grant needed flexibility to cargo carriers to meet the spirit of the TSA/ICAO requirements, are being reviewed. We've addressed these issues with the highest levels of TSA and expect the dialog with TSA staff to continue.

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NACA Joins Industry Effort on CORSIA

NACA joined an effort urging the U.S. government to support a baseline of 100 percent of 2019 aircraft carbon emissions levels at the upcoming ICAO Assembly. The ICAO Carbon Offset and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), established in 2016, committed airlines to offset their emissions above those calculated as the average of 2019 and 2020 as a short-term step towards achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

NPRM for pilot credit hours

The FAA published a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) on September 21, 2022, outlining changes to counting of credit hours towards the 1500-hour requirement. Hours from certain types of military operations and certain types of part 135 operations would be applied toward the requirement. One of our members was granted an exemption to count Part 135 hours in 2018 that is now reflected in the NPRM. NACA forwarded the NPRM to the Operations Council members.

San Bernardino airport flight irregularities

The FAA has discovered multiple reports of flight irregularities at San Bernardino airport, where some of our members fly. These numerous reports were forwarded to the Operations Council for awareness. Some of our members highlighted additional issues for the FAA, including instances of flight directions from ATC causing flight crews to be high and fast for the turn onto approach, the fact that about 50% of local traffic aircraft are not equipped with transponders, and that five pilots in seven aircraft are practicing aerobatics in the area.

Upcoming events for NACA councils

NACA will be hosting the Joint Implementation Measurement Data Analysis Team (JIMDAT) meetings on October 4-5, the CAST meeting on October 6, and the NACA All Councils meeting – Operations, Maintenance and Safety – on October 19. We expect excellent attendance from NACA and FAA representatives at all meetings. NACA just completed the agenda for the 119 Leadership Session before Infoshare, which soon will be distributed to all 119s. Since NACA the industry co-chair for the cargo session at Infoshare, we also are requesting presentations from some of our members.

NACA Board of Directors Meeting (12-13 October)

The October NACA Board of Directors meeting will be held at NACA HQ on Thursday, October 13, with a reception and dinner on Wednesday evening, October 12. Carol “Annie” Petsonk, DOT Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs, is tentatively scheduled as our primary guest speaker. This will be an important meeting for member input on the NACA Strategic Plan and 2023 budgeting issues, so attendance from all members is strongly encouraged.

