

NACA

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NACA calls on DOT to convene stakeholder meeting on pilot shortage

On August 3, NACA publicly urged Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg to convene a meeting of all interested stakeholder groups, including the Families of the Victims of Continental Flight 3407 (Colgan families) and the Air Line Pilots Association, to discuss pilot supply challenges confronting the U.S. airline industry. We asked Sec. Buttigieg to hold the meeting by the end of 2022 to inform discussions on the 2023 FAA Reauthorization bill. We expect to receive a formal response from DOT in September.

NACA meets DOT Assistant Secretary for Aviation

NACA met with DOT Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs Annie Petsonk on July 28, to discuss our top policy priorities, including pilot supply challenges, the need to enhance ULCC access to the nation's most congested airports, the importance of holding the line on the industry's tax and regulatory burdens, and sustainability initiatives. During the meeting, Petsonk expressed interest in potential policy options to increase the pilot supply, which prompted our request on August 3, that DOT host a stakeholder meeting.

NACA participates in NTIA Industry Coalition Meeting to discuss 5G

NACA participated in a virtual meeting with National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) officials on August 18, to express concern about the 5G retrofit timeline that the FAA and telecommunications companies agreed to earlier this summer. The FAA expects commercial airline operators to install filters and replace radio altimeters by July 2023 to enable full 5G service near major airports. The NTIA plays a key role in setting national telecommunications policy.

NACA urges swift FAA Administrator confirmation

On August 16, NACA urged Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee leadership to move quickly to confirm Denver International Airport President and CEO Phil Washington as FAA administrator. We expect a confirmation hearing in September, with a final Senate vote before Congress leaves town for the November elections. Billy Nolen will remain Acting Administrator until Mr. Washington is confirmed.

TSA Starting Cyber Calls

TSA recently has spoken with industry on proposals related to cyber performance standards and will continue discussions through September. Initial calls were directed at larger passenger and cargo carriers; we will monitor for potential changes placing requirements on mid-size and smaller carriers.

NACA Security Council Meeting

The NACA Security Council will be meeting in Charleston, S.C., on August 23. We will have robust participation from TSA and CBP during the meeting. Those will be an opportunity to tour the Boeing manufacturing facility in Charleston on the morning of August 24.

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NACA Issues RAMP Comments

In consultation with our airline members, NACA submitted comments on the TSA's RAMP badge proposal on August 12. We requested TSA compel airports to permit RAMP-badged transient flight mechanics to access the footprint of the aircraft without any escorts, process or uncertainty which could impact operations. Our comments also reminded TSA to ensure the Airport Security Program is amended to reflect the changes proposed.

FAA request to collect 5G data

NACA joined a call with aviation stakeholders regarding FAA's request for associations to collect 5G data to meet the July 2023 deadline for installing filters or new radio altimeter upgrades. It was determined that manufacturers were in the best position to work with airlines and provide regular updates to the FAA, rather than placing associations in the data collecting role. Protecting airline-specific information was addressed. MITRE will lead on processing manufacturer's data and providing data presented by fleet type upgrades and forecasting to the FAA. A follow-up call has been scheduled near the end of August.

5G technical update

FAA aircraft certification officials briefed NACA members on the process and status of the Airworthiness Directive on 5G at the NACA maintenance council meeting in August. Radio altimeter OEMs will verify the capabilities of meeting the current 62dB interference requirement. FAA stressed that although the technology for 5G being provided is rated at 62dB, the FCC has authorized a 65dB power level. This means that airlines will potentially need another retrofit if 5G providers develop a higher power capability a few years down the road. When the AD is released later this fall, NACA plans to comment that an extension of the current AMOC's should be granted if altimeter providers cannot meet the demand.

Secondary barriers for passenger aircraft

The NPRM for the AD on secondary barriers was recently released, which addresses the congressional mandate. The AD will require airline manufacturers to install the secondary barrier on newly produced aircraft starting two years from the issue date of the AD. There is no requirement for retrofitting existing aircraft or any cargo aircraft.