

NACA

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House and Senate Leadership Name Committee Chairs

The 118th Congress convened earlier this month, with House and Senate leaders naming most key committee chairs and members. In the House, Reps. Sam Graves (R-Mo.) and Garret Graves (R-La.) will become chairs of the full Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and Aviation Subcommittee, respectively. Democratic leaders tapped Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Wash.) to be ranking member of the full T&I Committee but have yet to name subcommittee chairs. We understand that Rep. Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.), a proponent of regulating commercial passenger airline seat dimensions, is the front runner to be ranking member of the aviation subcommittee. In the Senate, Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) will remain chair of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, with Senator Kyrsten Sinema (I-Ariz.) also remaining chair of the Senate Aviation Subcommittee. Senate Republican leadership have yet to name committee ranking members, but Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas), seems likely to succeed Senator Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) as ranking member of the full Senate Commerce Committee, and Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), would succeed Cruz as ranking member of the Senate Aviation Subcommittee.

Chairman Graves Delivers Aero Club Keynote

During his keynote at the Aero Club of Greater Washington last week, new House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Sam Graves (R-Mo.), outlined his agenda for the upcoming FAA reauthorization bill. Chairman Graves said his goal is to send a bill to President Biden by the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2023. Significantly, one of his priorities is to address the pilot shortage by updating pilot training regulations regarding flight simulator and other advanced training procedures. Graves reiterated his opposition to the 1500-hour rule but conceded that it remains a highly emotional issue. However, securing additional credit towards the 1500-hour threshold for advanced training is on the table. Graves plans to continue the long-standing tradition of bipartisanship on the T&I Committee, noting that he is close friends with Ranking Member Larsen.

Security and Cyber Security Councils

NACA's Security and Cyber Security Councils met last week with robust participation from TSA, DHS, FBI, the aviation ISAC, and FAA. Threat briefings were provided, focusing on physical threats as well as cyber threats, and we engaged in lengthy discussions with TSA about policy, compliance and operational issues. Assistant Administrator Kevin Fredrick, the highest-ranking official from the operations and compliance section of TSA, spent over an hour with the group in a highly informative conversation. We determined to form an ad hoc working group to engage with TSA on re-writes of various aspects of security programs, taking place sometime later this year. Our next security council meeting will occur in late spring.

Known Crew Member (KCM)

Late last year press reports indicated changes may be coming to the KCM program. TSA has communicated to industry that they will be taking over the day-to-day management of the KCM program from Airlines 4 America (A4A). It is unlikely there will be any significant front-facing changes to KCM. We are expecting a TSA call with industry next week, which will likely detail how and when TSA will implement those changes.

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Cargo Amendments Extended

TSA announced in early January that it was extending the Impracticable to Screen (ITS) and on-demand amendments through October of this year. TSA is considering rescinding the ITS amendment but has yet to replace it with a workable alternative, leading to the extension. We expect the ITS amendment to be replaced this year. We will engage with TSA on solutions in the coming weeks. The on-demand amendment, which is used much more frequently by our cargo members, is expected to be formally written in the Full All Cargo Operator Standard Security Program (FACOSSP).

Air Carrier Training – Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ACT-ARC) Meeting

NACA attended the ACT-ARC meeting in Dallas this month. We received a briefing on the De-Escalation training approved by the ACT-ARC and how the communication plan to industry is proceeding. The Airline Flight Attendants Association (AFA) presented four new areas of concern. The ACT-ARC determined one of the requests to be ready for consideration: AFA will form recommendations and request a review of turbulence-caused injuries. AFA will present a formal request to the ACT-ARC for approval, followed by formation of an ACT-ARC action team. The Spatial disorientation working group presented a report including simulation training devices for the condition. A4A presented a request to examine credits for training in simulators that meet the intent but are not currently creditable. The ACT-ARC will form an action team to review the request and make a recommendation to the ACT-ARC, followed by a vote to move forward.

Pipeline, Pathways, and Partnership Working Group (P3 WG)

NACA hosted the P3 WG in early January in an effort to find a new way to establish credit hours for various programs. The goal is to demonstrate quality is better than quantity and credit more hours towards achieving the 1500-hour mandate. The first session was devoted to collecting data and discussing various options that should be considered.

Safety Management System Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (SMS NPRM)

A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was issued January 11, proposing to add Part 135 and other regulated entities – except for Part 145 – to the SMS process. The proposal adds a few changes to the current Part 121 requirements under Part 5. Some of these changes could have an impact on current 121 systems. One suggested change is to redefine the definition of “hazard identification.” A request was granted to extend the proposed 60-day comment period by an additional 30 days.

Infoshare

NACA is on the Infoshare planning committee; requests for presentations and to register for the Infoshare have been distributed. NACA will also co-chair the cargo session on Thursday. NACA is asking our cargo members to participate and volunteer to present during the session.

NACA Spring 2023 Board Meeting

NACA will hold its Spring 2023 Board of Directors meeting in Miami, Fla., on Wednesday, March 1, at the Mutiny Hotel in Coconut Grove. To kick off the meeting, NACA will present Vice Adm. Dee L. Mewbourne, U.S. Navy, Ret., with the 2023 Ronald N. Priddy NACA-CRAF Partners in Airlift Medal. Members who have not yet registered to attend should contact NACA. We look forward to seeing everyone in Miami!