United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 15, 2011

John D. Rockefeller, Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Kay Bailey Hutchison, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rockefeller and Ranking Member Hutchison:

A bill that was recently introduced by Senator Inhofe, S. 1335, the Pilot's Bill of Rights, has been referred to your committee. It currently has 32 cosponsors, 13 of which are members of the Commerce Committee. With a majority of committee members having already voiced their support for this legislation, we respectfully request that you hold a committee or subcommittee hearing and markup of this legislation.

During the drafting of this legislation, Senator Inhofe worked extensively with the Aircraft Owners and Pilot's Association and the Experimental Aircraft Association, both of which have strongly endorsed this bill, as well as private aviation attorneys. It became clear during this process that several common sense changes should be made to enhance the relationship between the FAA and general aviation, and those were incorporated into the bill.

First, the bill requires that in an FAA enforcement action against a pilot, the FAA must grant the pilot all relevant evidence, such as air traffic communication tapes, flight data, investigative reports, flight service station communications, and other relevant air traffic data 30 days before the FAA can proceed in an enforcement action against the pilot. This is currently not done and often leaves the pilot grossly uninformed of his alleged violation and recourse.

Second, the bill also allows for federal district court review of appeals from the FAA, at the election of the appellant, and states that the NTSB shall not grant deference to the FAA in an appeal, should the pilot choose to go the NTSB route. Both of these things are done because too often the NTSB rubber stamps a decision of the FAA, giving wide latitude to the FAA and making the appeals process meaningless.

Third, this bill requires that the FAA undertake a Notice to Airmen Improvement Program, requiring simplification and archival of NOTAMs in a central location. The process by which Notices to Airmen are

provided by the FAA has long needed revision. This will ensure that the most relevant information reaches the pilot. Non-profit general aviation groups will make up an advisory panel, which we believe will give pilots a seat at the table when deciding how the NOTAM system can be improved.

Fourth and finally, the FAA's medical certification process has long been known to present a multitude of problems for pilots seeking an airman certificate. The bill simply requires a review of the FAA's medical certification process and forms, to provide greater clarity in the questions and reduce the instances of misinterpretation that have, in the past, led to allegations of intentional falsification against pilots. Non-profit general aviation groups, aviation medical examiners, and other qualified medical experts will make up an advisory panel to advise the Administrator, again giving the right people a voice in the overall determination.

Again, we hope that you will schedule a hearing and markup of this legislation that is extremely important to the general aviation community. As many of us sit on your committee, we look forward to being an active part of this process.

Sincerely,

Kelly A. Ayotte

Jerry Moran

Lamar Alexander

John Boozman

Olympia Snowe

Tom Coburn

Mike Enzi

Ron Johnson

Jim E Risch

Saxby Chambliss

[illegible]

Mark Pryor

John Barrasso

Debbie Stabenow

[illegible]

Susan Collins

Mike Crapo

Dan Coats

Mike Johanns

Jeff Sessions