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Dr. Bradley Colman
National Weather Service
Seattle Weather Forecast Office
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, Washington 98115-6349

Re: Proposed Relocation of the Stampede Pass ASOS to Snoqualmie Pass

Dr. Colman,

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), representing more than 400,000 members nationwide, submit the following comments in response to the proposed relocation of the Stampede Pass (KSMP) Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS) to Snoqualmie Pass.

Due to the unique geographical configuration of KSMP, it is a preferred route for pilots crossing the Cascades, particularly for transient pilots unfamiliar with the Columbia Gorge route. The high altitude weather information at KSMP is critical to safety of flight when operating on that route. The combination of weather reports from KSMP and other mountain reporting stations are crucial to pre-flight planning and allowing pilots to select the safest route across the Cascades.

While AOPA understands there are logistical issues related to the ongoing operation of KSMP, relocation of the ASOS to a lower altitude location could greatly hinder the critical weather information that pilots currently receive. We encourage the National Weather Service (NWS) to explore and prioritize alternatives that would allow continued availability of KSMP weather information to the aviation community at its present location.

In addition, AOPA strongly urges the NWS to reach out to all aviation stakeholders moving forward as we understand many groups were notified of the proposed relocation secondhand. User comments and input are a critical part of determining pilot weather needs and our hope is that NWS will ensure proper outreach and input is solicited. If AOPA can be of assistance in that outreach, we would welcome the opportunity to assist.

Sincerely,

Melissa McCaffrey
Senior Government Analyst
Air Traffic Services