

November 14, 2019

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Chairman  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Aviation  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Garret Graves  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Aviation  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Peter DeFazio and Rick Larsen and Ranking Members Sam Graves and Garret Graves:

We are writing to express our opposition to current legislation that attempts to restrict general aviation's access to airspace and undermine the federal preemption provision of the Airline Deregulation Act (ADA).

Uniform federal authority is an essential predicate to the safe and efficient administration of the National Airspace System (NAS). Any changes to this well-understood federal authority will open the door to a tangle of conflicting state regulations, encouraging inefficiencies and jeopardizing safety.

Our associations represent the individuals and companies that make up a significant portion of the diverse and interrelated general aviation industry in the United States. This is an industry that generates more than 1 million jobs and more than \$200 billion for the nation's economy.

H.R. 4880, the Improving Helicopter Safety Act of 2019 that was introduced by Representatives Carolyn Maloney, Jerrold Nadler, and Nydia Velázquez, would prohibit the operation of "nonessential" civil rotorcraft in "covered airspace," which the bill defines as "airspace directly over any city with a population over 8 million people and with a population density of over 25,000 people per square mile, including the airspace over any waterways considered within the limits of such city."

The legislation would have no positive impact on improving the safety of commuter, charter, and tourism flights, and its negative impacts would be immediate and significant. It would completely dismantle a thriving rotorcraft industry in affected areas, dealing a devastating blow to the many businesses that depend on and support it. Additionally, the proposed bill establishes a dangerous precedent for future legislative restrictions on access to airspace for general aviation and risks stymieing the development of vertical flight for both unmanned aircraft systems and urban air mobility.

H.R. 4547, the Safe and Quiet Skies Act, introduced by Representative Ed Case, would prescribe a series of restrictions on air tour operators, prohibiting specific flight routes, altitudes, and common procedures. It would also require commercial air tours to have a noise signature no greater than 55 A-weighted decibels during overflight of any "occupied area"—a standard that no currently certificated helicopter can meet.

Of chief concern to the general aviation community is the bill's proposal to cede federal authority of the NAS to state and local governments. This runs directly counter to the intent of Congress in enacting the

federal preemption provision of the ADA. H.R. 4547 enables local governments to impose additional requirements and restrictions on commercial air tours including outright banning of such tours.

Our organizations urge the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to oppose H.R. 4880 and H.R. 4547. Both bills, whether through undermining federal preemption or prescribing unwarranted airspace restrictions on general aviation, would be detrimental to the industry and the NAS.

Thank you for considering our views on these important issues.

Sincerely,

Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association  
Experimental Aircraft Association  
General Aviation Manufacturers Association  
Helicopter Association International  
National Business Aviation Association  
National Air Transportation Association