



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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November 9, 2007

Mr. William F. Vedra, Jr.
Executive Director
Ohio Emergency Management Agency
Charles D. Shipley Building
P.O. Box 182081
Columbus, OH 43218-2081

RE: Declarations of Material Assistance for Aircraft Registrations

Dear Mr. Vedra:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of 414,000 members, more than two-thirds of the nation's pilots – including nearly 14,000 in the state of Ohio. Last year, we heard from numerous members from your state expressing their strong displeasure that Ohio aircraft owners are required to sign the State's Declaration Regarding Material Assistance/Non Assistance to a Terrorist Organization (DMA).

When Ohio adopted the law that is now Ohio Revised Code Section 2909.32 (A)(1), it authorized the director of public safety to identify "licenses" issued by the state for which a holder could have some connection to a terrorist organization. We strongly believe that the previous administration incorrectly applied this statute to the registration of aircraft required by Section 4561.18 of the same code because the enabling legislation applied not to registration, but to licenses issued by the state.

There is a difference between licensing an operator and registering a vehicle. As we review the list of licenses to which the DMA is applied, it is apparent that the Department has focused its attention on individuals who are licensed to perform some specific activity. Registration in the case of aircraft is clearly intended as a method of collecting taxes on aircraft that are based in the state. It should not be the basis for requiring aircraft owners to submit a DMA with their annual registration or registration renewal. Additionally, the law states that this rule shall not apply to a renewable license or permit, which is clearly the nature of an annual aircraft registration.

Ohio's aircraft owners and pilots are committed to do their part to support our nation's security. That is why they commit to secure their aircraft and keep alert for suspicious activity, as part of the AOPA and Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) nationwide *Airport Watch* Program. In addition, many community airports have also implemented security programs and enhancements such as fencing and access controls. Enclosed are some examples of our cooperative outreach efforts with other states. We have worked with many states to promote aviation security, and would be glad to work in a similar fashion with the State of Ohio.

Mr. William F. Vedra, Jr.
November 9, 2007
Page 2

You should also be aware that Congress has specially charged federal agencies, particularly the TSA and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) with responsibility for the nation's aviation security. Along with other federal law enforcement and security agencies, the FAA and TSA have instituted several comprehensive and effective programs. Amongst their many efforts, they constantly review lists of certified pilots and student pilots for links to known or potential terrorists, and carefully screen all foreign nationals seeking pilot training.

The aviation community takes security very seriously. Even so, we seriously doubt that a signature on the DMA provides the state or its citizens with real security or even valuable information. We strongly urge you remove aircraft from the DMA identified licenses list.

Sincerely,


Gregory Pecoraro
Vice President, Regional Affairs