



May 13, 2011

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
U. S. Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rockefeller:

As the House and Senate work to complete reauthorization legislation for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), and National Business Aviation Association (NBAA), request your support for Section 817 of the House-passed measure (H.R. 658) which would maintain the current FAA Block Aircraft Registration Request (BARR) program. Our associations collectively represent nearly all of the general aviation aircraft operators in the United States — including thousands who participate in the BARR program for legitimate privacy, security and competitive reasons.

The BARR program was originally enabled by Congress in the 2000 FAA reauthorization bill (the "Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century"), in response to advances in computer technology and the advent of for-profit commercial flight-tracking services. Under the BARR program, the FAA, Department of Homeland Security, and law enforcement agencies always retain their ability to track general aviation aircraft movements, but general aviation operators are provided the ability to "opt-out" of having their real-time private movements disseminated beyond the government to unknown third parties throughout world.

On March 4, a notice was published in the *Federal Register* that the FAA has tentatively decided to dramatically curtail the BARR program — effectively limiting the program's privacy protection to only those with a known and specific security threat (broad security concerns would not be covered under this proposal).


Significantly limiting the BARR represents an unwarranted invasion of the privacy of aircraft owners and operators, a threat to the competitiveness of U.S. companies and a potential security risk to persons on board.

Americans have a reasonable and appropriate expectation of privacy in their personal movements regardless of the mode of transportation involved. It would set a dangerous precedent to establish a policy that movements in any type of vehicle (whether car, train or airplane) can be disseminated by the federal government to unknown third parties against a citizen's will.

We believe the federal government should protect information on personal movements—not facilitate electronic stalking by strangers.

The Congressionally-enabled BARR program has worked well for over a decade by providing individuals and companies a “do not track” option similar to other opt-out programs throughout government. We respectfully request that you support preservation of the existing BARR program in the final FAA reauthorization bill.

Sincerely,



Craig Fuller
President and CEO
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association



Rod Hightower
President and CEO
Experimental Aircraft Association



Ed Bolen
President and CEO
National Business Aviation Association