

STATEMENT OF JOHN L. MCLUCAS, ADMINISTRATOR OF THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION, BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION, SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS AND REVIEW, FEBRUARY 3, 1976, ON AIRCRAFT CABIN SAFETY.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am John McLucas, FAA Administrator and I want to express my pleasure in appearing before you today as you begin your hearings on aircraft cabin safety. This is my first appearance before your Subcommittee since becoming Administrator, however, the thoroughness and diligence of this Subcommittee and its staff are well known to me. I can see that this Subcommittee and its staff have worked long and hard on this hearing. Evidence of this preparation and your commitment to aviation safety was recognized publicly in a national magazine last Sunday. We certainly share the sentiments expressed by you, Mr. Chairman, that we are aiming at the same goal "the safety of people who fly." I'm sure that the various issues discussed in that article will be addressed fully by FAA and other witnesses at this hearing. We applaud your efforts and for our part, I believe the FAA has co-operated with you in every possible way. I am confident that this will result in a very productive hearing which will assist all those who are working to improve aircraft cabin safety.

Mr. Chairman, I will briefly outline the agency-wide FAA program relative to aircraft cabin safety. Later on, after industry witnesses, FAA experts on research and development in this area are scheduled to appear. Then, the Director of the Flight Standards Service, Mr. Richard Skully, and the Federal Air Surgeon, Dr. H. L. Reighard will appear to conclude the hearing.

The basic mission and objective of the FAA is flight safety. There are many paths the FAA follows to fulfill this responsibility: aircraft and airman certification, operation of airways and air traffic control facilities, airport certification and development, research and development, and flight operations and maintenance of aircraft. The basic goal of the FAA is, and must continue to be, the prevention of accidents. Unhappily, experience and reason tells us that accidents will continue to happen. The FAA fully recognizes a complementary goal of achieving aircraft "crashworthiness". By "crashworthiness" we mean increasing the ability of the aircraft and its passengers and crew to survive an accident and its aftermath. The concept of "crashworthiness" has two basic components - design of the aircraft itself and the operational procedures utilized in an accident situation. It is my intention as Administrator to see that FAA activities in these two areas are vigorously pursued.

This Subcommittee is aware of the variety of research projects underway at the FAA Civil Aeromedical Institute (CAMI) in Oklahoma City. This research is directed at the so-called "human factors" involved in aircraft accidents. We are proud, and justifiably so I believe, of the accomplishments and the work currently underway by our doctors and laboratory research personnel there. I recently had the opportunity to visit CAMI and spend an afternoon seeing firsthand some of the research projects. We are confident that the results of this research will tangibly enhance

the FAA cabin safety program. Dr. Robert Dille, the CAMI Chief and some of his staff will be discussing this in more detail later in this hearing. Another research facility currently involved in activities relative to cabin safety is the National Aviation Facilities Experimental Center (NAFEC) at Atlantic City where we study the engineering aspects of aircraft design. I have also had the opportunity to witness some research projects there including one project being performed cooperatively with CAMI. This project is measuring gases that result from the combustion of materials found in aircraft cabin interiors and which may be hazardous to aircraft occupants. The FAA project director will also appear to discuss this program.

Performing research and development is not an end in itself. If we are to fulfill our mission the FAA must assure that the results of our R&D effort are utilized in our regulatory effort. This is a two-way street. Not only must our R&D effort assist us in making regulatory choices - we must, from an overall FAA management viewpoint, focus our R&D in the areas of particular concern. This means we must identify the safety problem areas.

This objective is a major FAA commitment. The FAA has underway two comprehensive regulatory programs - our Biennial Airworthiness, and Biennial Operations Review which impact on the cabin safety area. The purpose of these programs is to invite the industry and the public to propose rules for adoption by FAA in the areas of airworthiness and operation of aircraft.

The FAA has published these proposals and our own proposals with explanatory material and invited public comment in an open forum. Over 1300 proposals have been considered during these Reviews and more than 300 different proposals deal with specific aspects of cabin safety. Many of these will eventually result in FAA formal rulemaking, others will be implemented directly by the industry - all will be carefully considered and evaluated. Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRMs) arising from the Airworthiness Review have already been issued. A similar group of NPRMs coming from the Operations Review will begin to be issued next month. This is not the end of the FAA regulatory effort. We are continually reviewing our existing regulations and encouraging and receiving suggestions from all segments of the aviation community and the public. We are striving to maintain a continuing dialogue in the common interest of flight safety. Before we can find the answer we must try to identify the problem.

Identification of problems can be a valuable product of this hearing. I understand that the Association of Flight Attendants, the Transport Workers Union and the Air Transport Association have also been invited to appear. I don't think any of these groups has been hesitant in telling the FAA their views. However, I'm sure this hearing will add to the FAA's knowledge and understanding of the problems associated with cabin safety. I'm sure that suggestions and proposals

will be made to us. I assure you Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, all suggestions will be studied by the FAA and considered on their merits. That is the only policy consistent with the FAA's statutory responsibility.

I also recognize that there will be criticism directed at the FAA. Criticism that we have moved too slowly on occasions or chosen one solution over another favored by some groups. It cannot be disputed that some action has taken longer to be implemented than we might have wished but we are trying to improve the timeliness of our regulatory response. When immediate action is warranted and possible we will take it. Nor has action taken by the FAA always met with universal approval. But the FAA cannot afford to espouse a single point of view. Competing interests always affect our regulatory program. Technology, cost-effectiveness and the pure safety interest are often at odds. The FAA must balance these elements in arriving at our final product. Application of technology that does not substantially increase the increment of safety may be unwarranted. Developing equipment that is prohibitively expensive is a poor use of our resources.

We do not want to over-regulate, but when Federal regulations are needed we will not hesitate to promulgate them. It has been said Mr. Chairman,

that a perfectly airworthy or perfectly crashworthy airplane is an impossible goal. We intend nonetheless to bring that goal closer to reality.

In closing, I would like to again express the FAA's recognition of the value of the task undertaken by this Subcommittee and pledge our continued co-operation.