STATEMENT OF HAROLD W. BECKER, MANAGER, AIRSPACE RULES AND AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION DIVISION, FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION CONCERNING H.R. 3243. DECEMBER 9, 1991.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am Harold W. Becker, Manager of the Airspace Rules and Aeronautical Information Division. My division, located in our air traffic organization, is the focal point within the FAA for the establishment of rules and regulations governing allocation and utilization of navigable airspace and oversight of all air cartographic and aeronautical information programs, including aeronautical charting standards. By way of personal background, I have over thirty years experience with the FAA, as an air traffic controller and in several management positions, including Manager of the Safety Programs Division in the Office of Aviation Safety. I am also a licensed commercial pilot, a certified flight instructor, and an aircraft owner with over 3,000 flight hours.

I welcome the opportunity to appear before you today to provide the FAA's views on H.R. 3242, which is currently pending before the Subcommittee. The bill, as introduced by Representative Inhofe, would direct the FAA to publish routes on flight charts to safely guide pilots operating under visual flight rules (VFR) through and in close proximity to Terminal Control Areas (TCAs) and Airport Radar Service Areas (ARSAs). Section 2 of the bill would also statutorily define TCAs and ARSAs.

The need for accurate flight planning and navigational charts is crucial to flight operations in the National Airspace System. With the growing complexity of airspace in and around our major airports, the availability of such flight information is an important tool in reducing the potential for midair or near midair collisions. Because of its safety enhancement value, the FAA does not object to the bill's provision requiring that navigational charts be made available to pilots who operate VFR within and in proximity to complex terminal airspace. We view that provision as supplementing several ongoing airspace, educational, and VFR charting initiatives, which I would like to describe for the Subcommittee.

o In 1969, the FAA adopted the concept of TCAs to reduce the midair collision potential in congested airspace surrounding airports with high density air traffic by providing an area in which all aircraft would be subject to certain operating rules and equipment requirements. The first of the existing 29 TCAs was established in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1970. Since 1985, we have also designated 121 ARSAs for airports with a significant density of air traffic.

o In 1987, our Western-Pacific Region convened a joint task group with the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association and chartmaker Jeppesen-Sanderson Inc. (Jeppesen) to identify frequently flown VFR routes in the Los Angeles basin area.

The work of that group led to Jeppesen's publication, in 1988, of a series of prototype charts for evaluation by the public. As a result of the favorable response, Jeppesen produced a series of Los Angeles area VFR route charts for sale to the public in early 1990. Our Western-Pacific Region is currently developing similar route charts, with the cooperation of local users, for the San Diego and San Francisco areas. Jeppesen has indicated it will also publish VFR charts for these areas. In addition, we have recently released a Los Angeles basin study contract through our Office of Aviation Safety that will look further into the concept of VFR route charting.

o The success of the VFR route charts for the Los Angeles area resulted in the development of a national Terminal Area VFR Route Program to assist pilots in avoiding inadvertent penetration of certain types of airspace. Pursuant to this plan, FAA is developing the appropriate routing data to facilitate charting for the general aviation community. Adherence to such Terminal Area VFR Routes is voluntary and pilots must continue to comply with all applicable Federal Aviation Regulations. We are currently working with each of our regions to develop and implement the national plan.

o Project START, also initiated by our Western-Pacific Region Flight Standards Division, stands for "Safe Terminal Air Route Training." It is an accident prevention, educational program

incorporating all airspace users. Its goal is to reduce even further the potential of midair and near midair collisions. To date, approximately 8,000 airmen have participated in seminars held throughout the region. The seminars are designed to promote pilot awareness, obtain local perspectives, and present statistical and operational information on the near midair collision reports for the geographic location in which the seminars are held. Because of its success in the Western-Pacific Region, we are expanding Project START nationwide.

o The VFR Flyway Program, developed in 1983, is designed to enhance VFR transition through high density traffic areas by identifying multiple VFR flyways through high density traffic areas, which may be used as an alternate to flight within TCAs. Ground references are depicted on the flyway charts as guides for improved visual navigation. These charts are not intended to discourage VFR operations within TCAs, but are designed for information and planning purposes. Flyway Planning Charts are published on the back of existing VFR Terminal Area Charts.

The key to each of these initiatives has been the active involvement of National Airspace System users, as well as FAA professionals from our air traffic, flight standards and accident prevention organizations in both our regional and flight standards district offices, and in our terminal facilities. For example,

since 1987, we have been working with the Southern California Airspace Users Working Group, an association composed of nearly virtually every element of the aviation community. The group is currently looking at a long range redesign of airspace usage in the Los Angeles area to increase efficiency and greater access for the general aviation community, while enhancing safety for all users. While general guidance can be issued from my office, airspace issues, including charting, are complex and often unique to a particular airport or operating environment, and can best be addressed at the local level.

While we do not object to the provision in the bill to provide for charting for pilots operating in VFR conditions near or within TCAs or ARSAs, we believe there is a need for greater flexibility in the bill. We would urge that the first sentence of the proposed amendment to Section 307(b) of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 (49 U.S.C. App. 1348 (b)) be deleted and the following new sentence be inserted instead: "In carrying out clause (3), the Administrator shall provide for the charting of current, clearly defined routes transitioning through or leading to or from airports located within complex terminal airspace areas, where the Administrator determines that such routes would promote safety in air navigation."

The suggested new sentence deletes the requirement that the FAA "publish" VFR charts. Publication of charts by the Federal Government can be costly. Further, we believe that publication of

a new type of VFR charts could be efficiently facilitated by the private sector. As indicated earlier, one major chart manufacturer has begun marketing a product in the Los Angeles area and has expressed an interest in publishing charts for other areas. The recommended new sentence also eliminates the ambiguous phrase "close proximity" and deletes references to Terminal Control Areas and Airport Radar Service Areas, instead calling upon the Administrator to determine where the complexity of airspace appropriately calls for the development of VFR routes.

We would also urge that Section 2 of the bill, which statutorily defines TCAs and ARSAs, be deleted. If Section 2 is enacted, we face the possibility of needing legislation to effectuate desirable changes to TCAs or ARSAs if proposed changes fail to meet the statutory definition. We currently have the regulatory authority and flexibility to make airspace changes without resorting to the legislative process, and need that continued flexibility. In addition, statutorily defining TCAs or ARSAs would unnecessarily complicate and seriously undermine a significant international initiative that has been 13 years in the making. Working through the International Civil Aviation Organization, we are in the initial stages of implementing international commonality of airspace classifications.

Under a rule proposed by the FAA, the United States would adopt an international standard for classifying airspace. Under the new

international standard, positive control areas, jet routes, and area high routes would be designated Class A Airspace; TCAs would be designated as Class B Airspace; ARSAs would be designated Class C Airspace; control zones with control towers, which include airport traffic areas, would be designated Class D Airspace; and all other controlled airspace would be designated as Class E Airspace. Uncontrolled airspace would be designated as Class G. The new airspace standard would be introduced in three phases, and could be fully implemented by September, 1993. At that point, the terms "TCA" and "ARSA" would no longer be used. Therefore, in view of this pending change to airspace rules, it is important that the legislation not enact terminology that is soon to be obsolete.

We believe that our recommended changes to H.R. 3242 will not affect its underlying purpose. The proposed changes will allow, however, for the continuation of our international airspace classification effort, and should make available in a timely manner additional VFR navigational charting information, based on data developed by the FAA, to the general aviation community through private sector charting efforts.

Mr. Chairman that concludes my prepared statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have.