

House Transportation Committee Approves FAA Bill

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Washington, DC -- Legislation to reform Federal Aviation Administration programs, set policies and priorities for the nation's aviation system, and create jobs through aviation infrastructure improvements was approved by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee today.

The FAA Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2011 (HR 658) was introduced in the House by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John L. Mica (R-FL), Aviation Subcommittee Chairman Tom Petri (R-WI), and other Members. The measure was approved by a vote of 34 to 25. [More information](#) on today's Committee markup.

“This is a job-creating, fiscally responsible bill which saves \$4 billion by streamlining and consolidating FAA programs and facilities, increasing the use of cost effective programs, and responsibly increasing the role of the private sector in facility operations,” Mica said. “The federal government must do more with less, and this bill does just that by requiring the FAA to identify savings in a manner that does not negatively impact aviation safety. Our aviation system is critical to the U.S. economy, and this bill ensures that the nation's aviation industry remains vital and competitive.”

“The last reauthorization was in 2003, and that expired in 2007,” said Petri. “Since then, we have had a series of 17 extensions. That's no way to run a vital federal agency. The House passed reauthorization bills in the past two congresses, but didn't reach agreement with the Senate. Getting this bill enacted into law will provide needed certainty and consistent funding for more efficient and effective investment. We are in a difficult budget environment and can't do everything we want to right now, but we need to get on with the things we can and must do.”

Five labor-oriented Democratic amendments failed on recorded votes, including an amendment to strike the National Mediation Board rule change provision. A manager's amendment offered by Chairman Mica passed by voice vote.

A summary of provisions included in the FAA Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2011:

- Four-year bill, covering fiscal years 2011 to 2014, with overall funding level of \$59.7 billion.
- Bill provides approximately \$4 billion in savings compared to current funding levels. It requires the FAA Administrator to identify significant cost savings without cutting any safety critical activities.
- In accordance with the House Republican moratorium, the bill contains no earmarks.
- Creates and protects more than 600,000 U.S. jobs over four years, according to estimates.
- Overall funding levels are set at the FY08 appropriations levels for the remainder of FY 2011 and beginning in full in FY 2012.

- For NextGen, the bill streamlines processes and provides funding for priority NextGen air traffic control modernization projects planned in the next four years. Sets deadlines and metrics for better measurement of NextGen progress and to ensure more effective cost management.
- Allows for expansion of the cost effective contract tower program, which allows airports to utilize privately operated, more efficient control towers (under FAA contract, regulation and supervision). Creates the potential to save approximately \$400 million over four years.
- Sets up a process for the consolidation of aging, obsolete and unnecessary FAA facilities, which will result in significant savings.
- Institutes a risk-based approach to inspections of foreign repair stations in a manner that protects U.S. jobs and respects bilateral agreements. Previous Democrat proposals would have cost jobs and invited retaliation from other nations.
- Phases out funding and sunsets the Essential Air Service (EAS) Program, providing savings of approximately \$400 million over four years.
- Does not include an increase in airport Passenger Facility Charges.
- Includes binding arbitration for air traffic controllers and other FAA employees to resolve labor impasses.
- Repeals unionization election rule changes implemented in May 2010 to again ensure that a majority of a workforce must vote in favor of union representation.
- Includes compromise language on slots at Reagan National Airport that increases beyond perimeter slots by 10 without increasing the total number of operations at the airport.
- The bill also omits controversial provisions that have stopped previous FAA bills from moving forward and becoming law:
 - Does not contain antitrust immunity sunset
 - Does not contain ban on cell phones
 - Does not contain PFC for bike storage at airports
 - Does not contain the controversial FedEx provision