

Aerospace Medical Association



President
Donald C. Arthur, M.D., Ph.D.
1329 Merrie Ridge Road
McLean, VA 22101

320 South Henry Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-3579
Phone: 703-739-2240
Fax: 703-739-9652
www.asma.org

Executive Director
Secretary-Treasurer
Russell B. Rayman, M.D., M.P.H.
Association Home Office

September 7, 2001

The Honorable Don Young
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative Young:

As Executive Director of the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA), the membership of which consists of physicians and scientists engaged in the practice of aerospace medicine or in related research, I am submitting to you our comments regarding H. R. 2158, Aircraft Clean Air Act of 2001.

We believe that this Bill should be either withdrawn or tabled. Congress has already directed the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act of the 21st Century (passed April 2000) to request the National Research Council (NRC) to perform an independent study on aircraft cabin air quality. In response to this directive, the NRC formed the Committee on Air Quality and Passenger Cabins of Commercial Aircraft. I am a member of that Committee and our final report will be published this October. Consequently, we urge you to await the recommendations of the Committee before implementing another plan as described in H. R. 2158.

Regarding H. R. 2158 as written, it would place an onerous burden on the FAA and air carriers with very little to be gained. In order to demonstrate causal relationship between cabin air quality and crew/passenger illness, it would be necessary to monitor the aircraft cabin air for contaminants and simultaneously establish a health surveillance system of the crew or passengers. The Bill only invites individuals who suffer a broad array of nonspecific symptoms to report it without correlating them with evidence (by monitoring) of contaminants in the cabin air. Although the Bill does call for analysis of filtration media, many potential contaminants such as volatile organic compounds, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and ozone are not trapped by the filtration system. This seriously vitiates the elements of H. R. 2158.

Consequently, the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA) strongly recommends that no legislative

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AEROSPACE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
THE INTERNATIONAL LEADER FOR EXCELLENCE IN AEROSPACE MEDICINE
73RD ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING, MONTREAL, CANADA, MAY 5 - 9, 2002

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