

Aerospace Medical Association



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Association Home Office

August 20, 2001

The Honorable John McCain
U. S. Senator
Russell Building, Rm. SR-241
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

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 Senate Bill 1019, 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We believe that this Bill should be either withdrawn or tabled.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 September. Consequently, we urge you to await the recommendations of the Committee before implementing another plan as described in S-1019.

Regarding S-1019 as written, it would place an onerous burden on the FAA and air carriers with very little to be gained. In order to demonstrate a 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. This 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 vitates the elements of S-1019.

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
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action be taken until the NRC Report has been studied by the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. The Aerospace Medical Association stands ready to assist you in any way. Please feel free to call me at any time. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Russell B. Rayman M.D.

Russell B. Rayman, M.D.
Executive Director