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SENATE

{ REPORT
105-152

**FAA RESEARCH, ENGINEERING, AND DE-
VELOPMENT PROGRAM REAUTHORIZA-
TION**

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

ON

H.R. 1271



NOVEMBER 9, 1997.—Ordered to be printed

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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FAA RESEARCH, ENGINEERING, AND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION

NOVEMBER 9, 1997.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. MCCAIN, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 1271]

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, to which was referred the bill (H.R. 1271) “An Act to authorize the Federal Aviation Administration’s research, engineering, and development programs for fiscal years 1998 through 2000, and for other purposes”, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon an amendment (in the nature of a substitute) and recommends that the bill (as amended) do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The legislation, as reported, would authorize \$229,673,000 for the activities of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Research, Engineering, and Development (RE&D) account for fiscal year 1998.

BACKGROUND AND NEEDS

The FAA RE&D account finances projects to improve the safety, security, capacity, and efficiency of the U.S. aviation system. Ongoing and planned FAA RE&D projects include those to determine how limited airport and airspace capacity can meet ever increasing demands, how aviation security can be improved, and how flight safety concerns can be addressed. This amendment would fund the RE&D account at \$229,673,000 for fiscal year 1998.

The FAA groups its RE&D projects in nine areas. These areas include Capacity and Air Traffic Management Technology; Communications, Navigation and Surveillance Systems; Weather; Airport Technology; Aircraft Safety Technology; System Security Technology; Human Factors and Aviation Medicine; Environment and Energy; and Innovative/Cooperative Research.

The FAA RE&D program includes partnerships with public and private entities. These partnerships enable the FAA to gain expertise in specialized areas of technology, and to leverage limited federal funds. The FAA, for example, now has more than 250 agreements for research and development partnerships with research organizations, foreign governments, and industry consortia. The FAA has also established several university-based research centers.

The FAA is also facing the so-called Year 2000 problem. According to the General Accounting Office and the Department of Transportation Inspector General, the FAA is behind schedule in determining which of its systems, including air traffic control systems, are affected by the Year 2000 problem. Furthermore, the FAA may need about two years to make the necessary software modifications, and then test the modifications to ensure that they work correctly. The bill includes a Sense of Congress recommending that the FAA assess its Year 2000 problems immediately, and develop a plan and contingency plans for correcting these problems.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

H.R. 1271 (H. Rept. 105–70), the “FAA Research, Engineering, and Development Authorization Act of 1997,” was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on April 30, 1997.

Senator Gorton, Chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee, introduced an amendment (Amendment 1544), in the form of a substitute to H.R. 1271 on October 31, 1997. Senators McCain, Hollings, and Ford cosponsored the amendment.

Amendment 1544 was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. On November 4, 1997, the Committee, without objection, ordered H.R. 1271 reported as amended by Amendment 1544.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR PROVISIONS

H.R. 1271, as amended, would:

1. Authorize the FAA RE&D account for fiscal year 1998 at a level of \$229,673,000.
2. Establish a \$750,000 research grant program to utilize undergraduate students at primarily undergraduate and technical colleges.
3. Disallow appropriation of funds that are not specifically authorized by this legislation.
4. Include a Sense of the Congress that the FAA should assess immediately the extent that its computer systems are affected by the Year 2000 problem, that it should develop a plan and budget to make needed corrections, and that it should develop contingency plans for those systems the FAA is unable to correct in time.

ESTIMATED COSTS

In accordance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee provides the following cost estimate:

The Report of the House Committee on Science (Report No. 105-70) to accompany the Act H.R. 1271 provided an estimate of cost prepared by the Congressional Budget Office. The amendments made by the Committee to H.R. 1271 would reduce the costs associated with the Act, but an estimate of the reduced costs by the Congressional Budget Office was not available at the time the Act was reported.

REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

In accordance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides the following evaluation of the regulatory impact of the legislation, as reported.

In accordance with paragraph 11(b) of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides the following evaluation of the regulatory impact of the legislation:

NUMBER OF PERSONS COVERED

This legislation provides an authorization of appropriations for the FAA RE&D program for fiscal year 1998. With the exception of authorizing additional grant funding, the legislation is simply re-authorizing the existing program. As such, the number of persons covered should be consistent with or only slightly above current levels.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

As reported, the bill extends an existing program. The funding levels are modest and are not expected to have an inflationary impact on the nation's economy.

PRIVACY

The legislation will not have any adverse impact on the personal privacy of the individuals affected.

PAPERWORK

The Committee does not anticipate any increase in the paperwork burden resulting from the extension of the FAA RE&D program.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title

This section cites the short title of the bill as the "FAA Research, Engineering, and Development Act of 1997".

Section 2. Authorization of appropriations

This section authorizes \$229,673,000 for the FAA RE&D program for fiscal year 1998. Of this total amount, the following sums are authorized for each of 10 categories:

- (1) \$16,379,000 for system development and infrastructure projects and activities;
- (2) \$27,089,000 for capacity and air traffic management technology projects and activities;

- (3) \$23,362,000 for communications, navigation, and surveillance projects and activities;
- (4) \$16,600,000 for weather projects and activities;
- (5) \$7,854,000 for airport technology projects and activities;
- (6) \$49,202,000 for aircraft safety technology projects and activities;
- (7) \$56,045,000 for system security technology projects and activities;
- (8) \$27,137,000 for human factors and aviation medicine projects and activities;
- (9) \$2,891,000 for environment and energy projects and activities;
- (10) \$3,114,000 for innovative/cooperative research projects and activities.

Section 3. Research grants program involving undergraduate students

This section establishes a program to utilize undergraduate and technical colleges in research on subjects of relevance to the FAA RE&D program. The program is to emphasize (1) research projects that combine research at primarily undergraduate institutions and technical colleges with research supported by the FAA, and (2) research on future training requirements on projected changes in regulatory requirements for aircraft maintenance and power plant licensees.

Section 4. Limitation on appropriations

This section disallows the appropriation of funds that are not specifically authorized by this legislation.

Section 5. Notice of reprogramming

This section requires the FAA to give notice to the House Committee on Science, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, if any funds authorized by this legislation are subject to a reprogramming action that requires notice to the Appropriations Committees.

Section 6. Sense of Congress on the year 2000 problem

This section recommends that the FAA assess immediately the extent that its computer systems are affected by the Year 2000 problem, develop a plan and budget to make needed corrections, and develop contingency plans for those systems the FAA is unable to correct in time.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In the opinion of the Committee, it is necessary to dispense with the requirements of paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate to expedite the business of the Senate.