

Latest News on the FAA Situation

by Dave Mathewson, AMA President

AMA continues to work hard to preserve the future of model aviation, just as the FAA continues to work toward regulating model aircraft. The pending regulations—really intended to focus more on the commercial, public-use small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) that want to assimilate into the National Airspace System (NAS)—will most likely have some impact on model aviation. In fact, while the FAA bylaws cannot tell us exactly what will be in the proposed rule, they have told us it will include some restrictions that modelers are not going to like.

As you know, AMA has an internal workgroup that has been developing a set of standards for aeromodeling that, once adopted by the FAA, will allow modelers who operate within the standards some latitude from the restrictions in the (default) rule.

Developing our standards has been nearly a two-year process and once completed, will be vetted through the entire model aviation community for comment before they are sent to the FAA for consideration. The members who make up our workgroup come from a diverse modeling background and bring an incredible amount of knowledge and expertise to the table. They have worked countless hours on our members' behalf.

www.modelaircraft.org/aboutama/govcontact.aspx

Since the regulatory effort began, we have been asking our members to be aware and engaged in its progress and to be prepared to react when the time is right. That time is here. The proposed rule will be released as a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) later this year. Although the original release date was scheduled for June, it now looks like it's been pushed back until late July or early August.

AMA has developed a multipart strategy to deal with this impending regulation. The first part, working with the FAA to develop standards to allow modelers latitude from the rule, has been the most visible—until now. The March issue of *Model Aviation* magazine, which you should have received in the last couple of weeks, outlines phase two of our plan. In this phase, we're asking our members to reach out to their elected representatives and tell them about the positive aspects of model aviation, its value as a family recreational activity, the value as an educational tool, and the fact that model aviation is a perfect stepping stone for our children that can lead them to careers in aviation and aerospace.

We want to point out that unnecessary regulation of model aviation can have a serious negative economic impact on an entire industry that supports what we do. In short, we need to educate our federal representatives, and this needs to be done in advance of the release of the NPRM.

All of this is outlined in detail in *Model Aviation* magazine as well as on a special section of the AMA Web site at www.modelaircraft.org/gov. There you will find background information on the entire process and learn more about AMA's team working on your behalf. There is also an

area that will provide some suggested text that you may use to automatically draft a letter to your representatives along with a way to identify who those representatives are.

The third phase of our plan will be an additional campaign in response to the NPRM, if necessary. Since we won't know exactly what the NPRM will contain until it's released in the Federal Register, we won't know how to react to it until then.

What we all need to do today is to visit the AMA Web site and draft a letter to Congressional representatives to let them know about all the positive aspects of model aviation and the potential harm that overly onerous regulations may cause to a viable recreational and educational family activity. As Leader Members and club officers, I'm asking that all of you please inform your membership and modeling friends of the importance of becoming involved. Ask them to send a letter to their representatives. It will only take a few minutes to help preserve the future of an activity that we all enjoy.

See you next time ...