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RULES DOCKET

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Sender: Carl Allen <carlcj@speedchoice.com> 1999 AUG 27 1:10
To: 9-NPRM-CMTS
Priority: Normal
Subject: Grand Canyon flights

I have been a tour coach driver for the last 10 years. One of the many places that I take passengers is the Grand Canyon. I may visit the Canyon upwards of 40 times a year, usually with 40 passengers. Ninety percent of my passengers are foreigners from other countries. We run on a tight schedule most of the time. We have many places to go and see, so we are limited to a 2 to 3 hour visit. Some of the tours do stay overnite, but due to the limited rooms available, that is becoming fewer and fewer.

I have lived in this area for the last 27 years and have visited the Canyon on my own many times. I have hiked the Canyon, and camped many times. I have even flown the Canyon. When I take my passengers there, I tell them all the different ways that I have seen it. They then decide to fly, knowing that they will never get back this way ever again. We now have to book at least 3 days in advance with our numbers. If you cut back these numbers, there are going to be many many people that will never really get to see the Canyon, except at Yavapai Point and the Lodge. This is too bad. I know that the helicopters are noisy and they have done a great job of keeping it as quiet as possible. Like I said, I camp there many times and I don't hear the helicopters when I am in camp, mainly because I am out enjoying the Canyon during the daylite and early evening hours, and am certainly up long before daylite to enjoy the sunrise.

The Grand Canyon is one of my favorite places. And I do visit many of the National Parks on a regular basis. It will be a shame to take it away from the tourists that have come many thousands of mile just to see it. And the only way for many to see it is from the air.

One of the things that I do agree on is parking the cars outside of the park. I will gladly park my coach outside the park and take the train inside. Many of the drivers and tour directors agree. Yosemite has been talking about that for years. It could work for the Canyon, but not Yosemite, at least not well. I agree that there are too many vehicles in both places.

I have just returned from there just moments ago. I was standing on the edge this morning at sunrise. The only thing that I could hear were the shuttle buses going back and forth. I was at that time standing between Yavapai Point and Mather Point. I drove thru park and saw a number of the shuttle buses. They are the noisy vehicles, and of course our tour buses, I know that. So, don't go a blame the evening and early morning noise on the helicopters. When I left the park this morning at 7 am, all the aircraft were still on the ground.

Now, what more do you want? If Fred Harvey cleans up his noise, then you could have a bit of a complaint. But, would you be so silly to cut your nose off to spite your face by cutting many many dollars from coming in? Of course you would.....