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September 2, 1999

U.S. Department of Transportation — Dockets
Docket No. FAA-99-5927
400 Seventh Street SW
Room Plaza 401
Washington, D.C. 20590

Ret Docket No. FAA-99-5927 - 53
NPRM Notice No. 99-12
Comments of the Havasupai Tribe (re Caps)

The following comments are submitted by the Havasupai Tribe to the NPRM Notice No. 99-12, wherein the FAA proposes to limit the number of commercial air tours that may be conducted in the Grand Canyon National Park Special Flight Rules Area.

The Havasupai Tribe believes the proposed action to establish a limit on commercial tours in the SFAR is long overdue, but will not be stringent enough, even in conjunction with other proposed actions, to achieve the statutory mandate imposed by Congress on FAA to provide substantial restoration of natural quiet at the Grand Canyon.

Today, only 32 percent of the Park enjoys natural quiet. Combined, FAA estimates that the proposed actions will raise this only to 41 percent by the year 2008, well short of the adopted standard — “50 percent or more of the Park achieving ‘natural quiet’ for 75-1000 percent of the day.”

We are going in the right direction, but our steps are too small.

For over two decades, it has been the consistent position of the Havasupai Tribe that all commercial fixed-wing tour flights should be removed from the Havasupai Reservation. For years the Havasupai Tribe has made its position known to the Secretary of the Interior and to the FAA. In fact, the Secretary of the Interior’s Land Use Plan for the Havasupai Reservation, adopted pursuant to Section 10 of the 1975 Grand Canyon Park Enlargement Act, codified at 16 U.S.C. § 228i(b)(4), acknowledged the Tribe’s desire to remove tour flights “[i]n the interest of privacy and respect for the peace and quiet of certain special areas” throughout the Havasupai Reservation.

Letter To: FAA
September 2, 1999
Page 2

The Havasupai Tribe endorses the proposed action to enforce caps on commercial air tours, but the caps are too high.

Please contact the Havasupai Tribal Chairman, Thomas Siyuja, Sr. or the undersigned if you have questions or would like more information.

Very truly yours,



Michael C. Shiel

MCS/jat

c: Chairman Thomas Siyuja
Havasupai Tribe

Roland Manakaja
Havasupai Tribe