

Federal Aviation Administration  
Docket No. FAA-2001-8690, Notice No. 01-01  
National Parks Air Tour Management: Proposed Rule

June 11, 2001

Director Fazio:

I wish to submit comments on the Federal Aviation Administration's proposed rule for Air Tour Management(docket no. FAA-2001-8690). I am grateful for the opportunity to make known my own feelings on this matter.

As a supporter of the National Park System, I place tremendous value on the natural wonders that exist in America's national parks. Breathtaking mountain vistas, untamed rivers, spectacular geologic features, incredible plant and animal life, fresh air, and natural quiet are all important parts of the Park experience. Whenever I travel to one of the National Parks, I do so to get away from the stresses and annoyances of everyday life. Putting up with the distraction of noisy machines(aircraft, snowmobiles, personal watercraft, etc.), is not my idea of communing with Nature. I believe that a strong plan for the management, and when necessary, the elimination of air tours in the National Parks is essential to their continuing health and maintenance.

I wish to offer my support for the 5000ft Above Ground Level altitude that is being recommended as the triggering altitude for Air Tour Management. This minimum altitude was also recommended by members of the National Parks Overflights Working Group with nearly unanimous consent. This AGL should capture most commercial air tour operators. Additionally, this AGL in no way interferes with general aviation traffic since only flight operators meeting the rest of the definitions described in the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 are defined as commercial air tour operators.

It is important that in any Air Tour Management Planning process, the FAA should recognize the National Park Service's expertise on natural quiet issues and defer to the Park Service's authority to determine the impacts of noise on park visitors, resources, and values. Further, I would ask that the FAA begin immediate enforcement of the "no new entrants" clause of the Act to prevent new air tour operators from flying over the parks before the air tour management process starts. I also would ask the FAA to block overflights by any existing air tour operators if such individuals ignore the FAA Advisory requesting air tour operators that fly over national parks to notify the FAA of their over-park operations within 90 days of the passage NPS Air Tour Management Act in April 2000. Finally, I request that the FAA clearly define for the public and for air tour operators the process through which air tour management plans will be developed.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit general comments on FAA Docket No. FAA-2001-8690.

Sincerely,

Ms. LeeAnn Bennett, email: lbennett@ku.edu