



March 25, 2002

Docket Clerk
Attn: Docket No. TSA-2002-11602
Transportation Security Administration
Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, SW
Room PL401
Washington, DC 20590-0001

RE: Civil Aviation Security Rules

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Regional Airline Association (RAA), on behalf of its 54 member airlines, appreciates the opportunity to comment on this Final Rule. RAA represents the interests of short-haul scheduled airlines operating under FAR Parts 121 and 135 and our members transported 94 percent of the 83 million passengers carried by regional airlines in 2001.

In January 2002 there were approximately 95 regional airlines providing air transportation to more than 680 U.S. airports with scheduled airline service. It is important to note that almost 70 percent of these airports are located in small communities that depend exclusively on regional airlines for their access to the national transportation system.

Regional airlines are committed to providing safe and secure transportation for our passengers and crewmembers. The air carriers have worked with both FAA and TSA to implement new regulatory requirements and enhance existing security procedures. We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on the referenced Final Rule.

Section 1544.229 – RAA is concerned that TSA has expanded the scope of airline employees who are subject to the criminal history record check (CHRC) without providing guidance to industry on several critical issues. These issues were raised in January 17 comments filed by RAA and the Air Transport Association in reference to Docket Number FAA-2001-10999 and include preemption of state and local laws; airport

acceptance of airline certification that the CHRC was conducted; and the need for the airline, as the employer, to be provided information on disqualifying crimes when an airport submits the fingerprint. Additionally TSA has not yet issued guidance to industry regarding those individuals with “unclassifiable fingerprints”, despite several requests from both airport and airline associations.

Section 1544.233 (c) - The rule states that recurrent GSC training must be "within one calendar month earlier, or one calendar month after the date it was required". Numerous regional airlines would like to conduct their recurrent GSC training during the same month system wide, rather than one month before or after the annual anniversary of the initial training. TSA should allow airlines to utilize this alternate system, as it allows a more efficient utilization of training manpower, ensures all personnel receive the same information and eliminates tracking/paperwork problems.

Section 1544.411 (d) – RAA does not believe that it is appropriate for airline GSC to conduct the annual proficiency review of contract screeners now that TSA has assumed responsibility for their oversight. While we recognize that this requirement will be eliminated after November 19, 2002 when all screeners and supervisors are federal employees, this section should be modified to only require these evaluations when air carrier employees are conducting the screening at the security checkpoint.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah C. McElroy
President