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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Docket Management System
U. S. Department of Transportation
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We believe that those entrusted with maintaining the security of the United States should do so with the least possible impact upon the freedoms of U. S. Citizens consistent with that security. With that belief in mind we offer the following observations regarding operations at the three Washington, DC-area general-aviation airports currently operating under Special Federal Air Regulation-94, namely, College Park Airport, Potomac Airport, and Hyde Field.

1) These airports have historically provided great service and convenience to pilots and passengers of small aircraft visiting the Washington, DC area for business or pleasure. Under present restrictions no transient aircraft are permitted access to any of these airports, potentially affecting citizens from all over the country. Perhaps in the interest of security, pilots wishing to land at one of these -convenient-to-Washington airports could be required to undergo the same background checks that pilots based at these three fields have had to and to file Temporary Flight Restriction flight plans to land at or depart from College Park, Potomac, or Hyde.

2) These three airfields have had to forego pilot-training activities even for rated pilots based at them due to prohibitions on training activities. Aspiring pilots have thus had their training interrupted or been forced to continue at less-convenient locations. This has worked hardship on student, pilots, their instructors, and the operators of these airports.

3) Now that all pilots based at these three airports have had the same background checks, there is no clear reason why they should not be permitted to make inter-field flights provided that they observe all other security regulations regarding flights in the restricted area.

4) These three airfields are not a very high security risk because they can accommodate only small aircraft which would be unlikely to be useful to terrorists. Further, anyone planning a terrorist attack would be less likely to originate their flight from one of these fields than one farther away because of the scrutiny of the operators of these airports and of the pilots based there.

5) These airfields depend for their very existence on transient aircraft, pilot training, and fuel sales. Since all of them have been severely impacted by current restrictions it is quite possible that they may be forced to close if the current restrictions are not reduced or lifted. College Park, in particular, has been in continuous operation as an airport since the days of the Wright brothers but due to the restrictions has lost many of its tenant aircraft. It would be truly unfortunate for the Washington, DC area to lose any of these important and historic general-aviation airports.

Sincerely,

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