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**Congress of the United States**  
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January 23, 2004

The Honorable Marion C. Blakey  
Administrator  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Blakey:

I am writing to request that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) hold public meetings to fully assess the potential impact of its National Air Tour Safety Standards notice of proposed rulemaking (Docket No. FAA-198-4521).

This NPRM could have devastating effects on more than 400,000 general aviation pilots and professionals who participate in charitable sightseeing events and tours under FAR Part 91. I am concerned that the FAA has failed to consider the true impact of this proposal on the general aviation community and contend that conducting public meetings will give FAA officials the opportunity to hear directly from those most affected.

The FAA's proposal to increase the minimum flight time for private pilots participating in charitable sightseeing events from 200 hours to 500 hours reduces the pool of available pilots to help in charity and fundraising flights.

Additionally, I am concerned that the sightseeing elements of the proposed rule will adversely affect the sightseeing business. Through the FAA's own admission, the proposed rule will result in hundreds of small sightseeing companies going out of business. Rural tourism contributes largely to New Mexico's economy. The vitality of New Mexico's rural tourism industry depends heavily on the aviation sightseeing industry.

As a licensed general aviation pilot, I have a keen understanding of the potential adverse impact of this proposed rulemaking on thousands of general aviation pilots and businesses. As a United States Congressman representing many of these pilots and businesses, I urge you to ensure that the proposed rule and its impact are thoroughly evaluated through a series of public meetings.

I appreciate your cooperation and look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

STEVAN PEARCE  
Member of Congress