



MEDIA RELEASE
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FAA Interpretive Rule addressing “Special Rule for Model Aircraft”

Academy of Model Aeronautics response

The Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) has reviewed FAA’s recently released Interpretive Rule in which the agency provided its interpretation of the “Special Rule for Model Aircraft” established by Congress as part of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-95). The Academy is extremely disappointed and troubled by the approach the FAA has chosen to take in regards to this issue.

As a community-based membership association, the AMA has managed and overseen the nation’s model aircraft activity for the past 77 years and has grown to over 165,000 members in all 50 states, the U.S. territories and at military installations around the world. Over the years the Academy has developed an effective safety program that has achieved an exceptional safety record and has evolved to accommodate new technologies, new modeling disciplines, and a diverse aeromodeling community. AMA’s achievements and ability to manage the model aircraft activity in a safe and harmonious fashion was recognized by Congress in its reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration in 2012. In an effort to protect the aeromodeling community from overreaching and onerous regulation, Congress established the Special Rule for Model Aircraft which exempts this activity from regulation provided it is conducted in accordance with and within the safety programming of a community-based organization, AMA.

States AMA President Bob Brown, “The FAA interpretive rule effectively negates Congress’ intentions, and is contrary to the law. Section 336(a) of the Public Law states that, ‘the Federal Aviation Administration may not promulgate any rule or regulation regarding a model aircraft...’, this interpretive rule specifically addresses model aircraft, effectively establishes

rules that model aircraft were not previously subject to and is in direct violation of the congressional mandate in the 2012 FAA reauthorization bill.”

The interpretive rule reflects the FAA’s disregard for and its unfamiliarity with the makeup of the modeling community. Nearly 20% of the AMA membership is 19 years old or younger and an even greater percentage is retirees over the age of 65. FAA’s intention to impose a strict regulatory approach to the operation of model aircraft in the hands of our youth and elderly members threatens to destroy a wholesome and enriching activity enjoyed by a vast cross-section of our society.

“AMA cannot support this rule.” said AMA Executive Director Dave Mathewson. “It is at best ill-conceived and at worst intentionally punitive and retaliatory. The Academy strongly requests the FAA reconsider this action. The AMA will pursue all available recourse to dissuade enactment of this rule.”

Founded in 1936, the Academy of Model Aeronautics continues to be devoted to the safe and responsible operation of model aircraft. With its nearly 2,400 clubs across the country, it serves as the nation’s collective voice for the aeromodeling community. Headquartered in Muncie IN, AMA is a membership organization representing those who fly model aircraft for recreation and educational purposes.

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