



MEDIA RELEASE

Date: February 7, 2012
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Senate joins House in passing FAA bill, exemption for aeromodeling

M U N C I E – The U.S. Senate late Monday joined the House in passing the first full FAA Reauthorization Bill in more than four years. In passing the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 both the House and Senate included a provision aimed at protecting model aviation from burdensome regulations. The President is expected to sign the bill into law.

“We are very appreciative of those in Congress who recognize that model aviation hobbyists have been highly successful at governing themselves and being safety conscious over generations,” said Bob Brown, president of the Academy of Model Aeronautics, representing 143,000 aeromodelers. “We are intensely committed to a safe National Airspace System (NAS), and have proven so. This bill is testimony to a common sense approach to model aviation.”

The AMA’s ongoing attempt to protect aeromodeling from what it believes to be unnecessary and overreaching federal regulations was championed by Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK) who sponsored the amendment. The Academy would like to express its sincere appreciation to the members of Congress and their staffs, with special thanks to John Mica (R-FL), Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-TX), Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) and Tom Petri (R-WI).

“I can’t stress enough the impact that AMA members have had on getting this amendment passed,” said Brown. “Last year, our members sent 90,000 letters of concern to their Congressional representatives, and the collective voice of aeromodeling was heard loud and clear.”

Rapid technological advancements and the integration of small unmanned aircraft systems, or sUAS, has been a challenge for the FAA, which is responsible for ensuring the safety of the NAS. The AMA has consistently contended that aeromodeling conducted by its members, following the AMA Safety Code, is different from commercial sUAS operations. That distinction lies, in part, with hobbyists operating within a defined area, away from people and property, and not for commercial purposes, among other self-imposed rules.

“This legislation is a very positive step,” said Rich Hanson, AMA’s Government Regulatory Affairs representative. “However, there are still steps to come. We look forward to a cooperative effort with the FAA in ensuring that model aircraft may continue to operate safely within the NAS.”

AMA expects that the FAA will issue its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for public comment sometime later this spring. The Academy continues to believe that a regulatory approach to model aviation is unnecessary and unwarranted.



Academy of Model Aeronautics

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The Academy of Model Aeronautics is the nation's collective voice for aeromodeling, founded in 1936, with 143,000 members in 2,400 clubs in every state, Puerto Rico and Guam. The AMA successfully sanctions more than 2,000 events and competitions each year, and boasts the world's largest collection of model aviation artifacts and documents in the National Model Aviation Museum situated on the 1,100-acre International Aeromodeling Center in Muncie, Indiana.

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