
FAA REAUTHORIZATION BILL SEEKS COMPREHENSIVE MODERNIZATION OF U.S. AVIATION

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On February 3, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee proposed a comprehensive rewrite of the nation's aviation system in the [Aviation Innovation, Reform and Reauthorization Act](#) ("AIRR Act"). If adopted, the proposal would transform the aviation industry for all users, from commercial flyers to manufacturers.

The AIRR Act includes a controversial provision to transfer control of the air traffic control system from the federal government to a federally chartered corporation governed by an 11-person board of directors drawn from aviation industry stakeholders. The AIRR Act is intended to "modernize" the nation's aviation system and includes numerous changes suggested during months of hearings and testimony to the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee ("House Committee").

An important goal of the proposed legislation is to upgrade the aircraft tracking system from World War II vintage radar to satellite technology. In a video presentation accompanying the release of the AIRR Act, House Committee Chair Bud Schuster claimed that the FAA's current radar system is responsible for significant flight delays and route inefficiencies, costing the United States billions of dollars annually.

The House Committee's press release states that the AIRR Act "streamlines the FAA's aviation equipment and aircraft certification processes, provides additional consumer protections, addresses aviation safety issues, gives the FAA more tools for the safe integration of unmanned aircraft systems, and provides for airport infrastructure improvements across the country." Notwithstanding the transfer of the air traffic control function, the FAA would continue to be responsible for enforcing air safety rules.

The House Committee proposed the AIRR Act as part of a six-year re-authorization of the Federal Aviation Administration. The plan proposes to shift the funding for the aviation system from general revenue taxes to taxes on plane tickets, aviation fuel, and other fees to be paid to the nonprofit corporation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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