

Hello,

I am writing on behalf of the Owls Head Transportation Museum, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization in Maine, regarding Docket 4521, dealing with sightseeing charity flights. The proposed legislation would effect not only the Owls Head Transportation Museum, but many other non-profit organizations in the Mid-Coast Maine area. I would like to share some insight on the facts of some operations that I have been involved with over the years. In 2004, the Transportation Museum will have been performing airshows and raffling biplane rides for 30 years. We have high standards placed on our aircraft, maintenance and pilots. We have given more than 3,000 rides and in this time have maintained a perfect safety record, incurring neither accident nor incident. A large amount of these rides are raffled off by other non-profit organizations, having been donated by the Museum to aid in the fundraising efforts of these organizations. A few examples of the organizations supported by the Museum and its ride giving capabilities are: Youthlinks, a youth partnership community organization; Penobscot Bay YMCA; service groups; local museums, community schools and educational organizations. These are the groups that will suffer the most in Mid-Coast Maine if the 25 nautical mile exemption were to be lifted.

The other organization I have been affiliated with is the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome in upstate New York. The Aerodrome will start its 46th season of airshows in the spring of 2004. Ride giving is an essential part of the survival of the Aerodrome and in the untold number of ride giving flights there has not been a single injury ever related to that operation on the premises. The lifting of the 25 nautical mile exemption would put this priceless operation at risk and eliminate an irreplaceable catalyst for future generations of pilots and astronauts.

The effects on goodwill between the aviation world and the world that sees the benefits of aviation in a different light since 9/11 will be most devastating.

Sincerely,
Karl Erickson
Aircraft Conservator
Owls Head Transportation Museum
Owls Head, Maine