

Senate to Continue Consideration of FAA Reauthorization Act



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Legislative Activity

Senate to Continue Consideration of FAA Reauthorization Act

On Monday, the Senate will resume floor consideration of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act of 2016. Over 100 amendments to the bill have been filed, but it is unclear how many will be offered on the floor this week. Additionally, Senate Leadership and the Finance Committee Chairman and Ranking Member are working on a revenue title that will likely include extensions to several renewable energy tax credits, which could impact the bill's prospects in the House. Aimed at avoiding a year-end tax extenders debate, the original extension bill introduced by House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) would have extended aviation-related revenue provisions into FY 2017.

The Senate FAA reauthorization bill avoids the contentious air traffic control (ATC) reforms included in the House's Aviation Innovation Reform and Reauthorization (AIRR) Act. The Senate bill would also only reauthorize FAA programs through September 2017, while the AIRR Act would reauthorize those programs through September 2022. Both bills include numerous provisions to hasten the integration of unmanned aircraft systems (drones), reform the certification process, and enhance

aviation safety.

The current short-term extension authorizes FAA programs through July 15, 2016, providing Congress just over three months to reach an agreement on a long-term bill. Due to the shortened legislative schedule and presidential election-year politics, it is unlikely Congress would be able to pass a long-term bill this term if they have not done so by July 15.

Last Thursday, the Senate approved two security-related amendments and another package of five amendments. The Senate also voted down an amendment directing FAA to regulate airplane seat sizes, offered by Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY).

Last week, the Senate approved the following amendments:

- Thune-Nelson #3512 – strengthens airport worker vetting, expands the Transportation Security Administration’s (TSA) PreCheck program, doubles the number of TSA special security teams that include bomb-sniffing dogs, and permits TSA to donate unused equipment to overseas airports that operate flights to the United States.
- Heinrich #3482 – expands the number of Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) teams to enhance the security presences in pre-screening airport areas and other transportation facilities, increases preparedness for active shooter incidents, and makes homeland security grant funding for states available for use in non-secure areas of airports and surface transportation facilities.
- Casey-Toomey #3458 – requires installation of secondary cockpit barriers on all aircraft manufactured for delivery to a U.S. passenger carrier.
- Heller #3495 – makes FAA unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) occupations subject to veterans preferences.
- Tester #3505 – requires a GAO study of the universal deployment of advanced imagine technologies.
- Collins #3508 – requires FAA to identify the process by which it analyzes the safety hazards associated with elimination of the contract weather observer program, and to prohibit FAA from discontinuing the program before October 1, 2017.
- Wyden #3499 – requires FAA to review heads-up guidance system displays.

This Week’s Hearings:

- Wednesday, April 13: The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Transportation and Public Assets Subcommittee will hold a hearing titled “Examining the Safety and Service of D.C. Metro.”
- Wednesday, April 13: The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Highways and Transit Subcommittee will hold a roundtable policy discussion on the implementation of Title V of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation

(FAST) Act.

- Wednesday, April 13: The Senate Appropriations Committee Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee will hold a markup of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act for FY 2017.
- Wednesday, April 13: The Senate Appropriations Committee Energy and Water Development Subcommittee will hold a markup of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act for FY 2017.
- Wednesday, April 13: The House Appropriations Committee will hold a markup of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act for FY 2017.
- Wednesday, April 13: The House Appropriations Committee Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee will hold a markup of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act for FY 2017.
- Wednesday, April 13: The House Appropriations Committee Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee will hold a markup of the Agriculture Appropriations Act for FY 2017.
- Thursday, April 14: The House Energy and Commerce Committee Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade Subcommittee will hold a hearing titled “Oversight of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.”
- Thursday, April 14: The Senate Appropriations Committee will hold a markup of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act and the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act for FY 2017.
- Thursday, April 14: The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing on oversight of options for addressing the continuing lack of reliable emergency transportation for the isolated community of King Cove, Alaska.

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