

## FAA AIRCRAFT CABIN AIR QUALITY STUDY

Legislation signed by President Reagan on October 11, 1984, directs the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to sponsor a "literature review" to determine whether certain aviation industry practices and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) rules, regulations and standards concerning aircraft cabin air quality are "nondiscriminatory and at least in conformance and parity with nonaviation standards."

The Department of Transportation (DOT) awarded a \$500,000 contract to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to conduct this review. As the clock started ticking when the legislation was signed, NAS has until April 11, 1986 to complete its review and make recommendations.

NAS has appointed a 12-member committee, chaired by the former president of Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York and directed by anti-smoker and NAS staff member James Frazier, to conduct the study. The committee will hold public meetings on its study June 12-13, and is calling for written comments by May 31.

The law directs that "special and objective considerations shall be given to the uniqueness of the environment" aboard aircraft. NAS, in its statement of work, proposes to address ten specific aspects of cabin air quality:

- o the quantity and quality of fresh air per passenger,
- o the quantity and quality of humidification,
- o onboard environmental conditions and contamination limits, including exposure to radiation, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone, hydrocarbons, "particulates especially from tobacco smoke" and infectious agents such as pathogens,
- o emergency breathing equipment,
- o fire detection and the removal of smoke from the cabin,
- o safe pressurization of the cabin,
- o collection and dissemination of a data base on medical statistics and environmental factors relating to air travel,
- o the adequacy of current preflight and inflight health and safety instructions,
- o a comparison of foreign industry practices, regulations and standards, and
- o an assessment of how the recommendations made in sections above relate to the health and safety of crew and passengers.

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Recommendations emerging from the study may be for legislative, regulatory or industry changes. Although the study is not expected to emphasize the smoking issue per se, addressing primarily cabin humidification and pressurization problems, it is likely that smoking will be addressed in some manner.

The history of the authorizing legislation -- including the hearing record -- indicate substantial concern with smoking as part of an overall examination of cabin air quality. Among the witnesses were aircraft manufacturers, flight attendant unions, airlines, consumer groups, trade associations and the FAA.

At present, The Institute is preparing comments to submit to NAS, emphasizing the absence of data indicating smoking represents a problem in the aircraft cabin environment. It also plans low-key discussions with other individuals and groups who have an interest in this issue. The aim of these discussions is to ensure that comments place smoking in its proper perspective.

We will, of course, continue to monitor the progress of this study.

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