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FRIDAY, MAY 31, 1991

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FLIGHT ATTENDANTS PETITION THE FAA TO
EXTEND THE DOMESTIC SMOKING BAN TO INCLUDE
INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS AND TO SET STANDARDS
FOR THE DESIGN AND INSTALLATION OF TAMPER-
PROOF AIRPLANE LAVATORY SMOKE DETECTORS.

Washington, D.C., May 30, 1991--The Independent Union of Flight Attendants (IUFA), The Union of Flight Attendants, (UFA), The Independent Federation of Flight Attendants (IFFA), and The Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA) filed a petition with the Federal Aviation Administration today urging the FAA to protect the health and safety of airline passengers and crew by banning smoking on all U.S. carriers. These organizations represent over 36,000 flight attendants who work for Pan American Airways, Continental, TWA, and American Airlines, respectively.

The petition was filed on May 31st to coincide with the World Health Organization's annual observance of "World No-Tobacco Day" whose theme is "Public Places and Transport: Better Be Tobacco-Free".

"It is now beyond doubt that environmental tobacco smoke is harmful, and sometimes deadly, to healthy nonsmokers. The Congress of the United States recognized this and acted to protect the flying public and flight crews by enacting the domestic aviation smoking ban which we now enjoy," said IUFA President Brian Moreau. "We believe that international travelers deserve as much protection as domestic travelers."

"The very serious health effects of passive smoking do not miraculously disappear when an airplane leaves our shores for a foreign port," said Mr. Moreau. "In fact, the longer the exposure, the higher the risk. Nonsmoking Flight Attendants are now suffering from serious respiratory illnesses from chronic exposure to secondhand smoke.

"The FAA has accepted responsibility for ensuring that an aircraft is a healthy and safe working and traveling environment," said Moreau. "We are now asking the FAA to fulfill that responsibility."

"We have filed this petition because of the overwhelming scientific evidence linking involuntary smoking to lung cancer and other respiratory illnesses in nonsmokers," said Kathy Renz,

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IUFA's Health and Safety Director. A recent major study cited in the petition estimates the annual death toll in the United States from passive smoking to be 53,000 people. The petition also cites reports of the U.S. Surgeon General and the National Academy of Sciences which indicate that the separation of an airplane cabin into smoking and non-smoking zones does not prevent exposure of flight attendants and nonsmoking passengers to environmental tobacco smoke.

"The public should be aware that the newer, more fuel efficient airplanes provide decreased outside air ventilation rates. On these airplanes, old cabin air is recirculated through the cabin--sometimes as much as 50% of it," said Mary Ellen Miller, Director of Health and Safety for IFFA. "As a result, many airline passengers on long international flights experience increased eye, nose, and throat irritation."

The petition also contends that smoking and the accompanied use of matches and cigarette lighters pose a serious threat to the safety of passengers and crew.

"Passengers on smoking flights tend to gather in the back of the airplane to socialize and smoke," said Hugh Wagner, National Safety Coordinator for the APFA. "We see cigarette ashes flicked carelessly and even put out on the aircraft carpet. We see passengers lose their cigarettes behind seat cushions or fall asleep with lit cigarettes still in hand. When alcohol is added to the equation, the safety hazards are compounded as passengers become even less cautious in the handling of their cigarettes."

In addition to a smoking prohibition on all U.S flights, the petition calls for the FAA to set standards for the design and installation of effective and tamper-proof lavatory smoke detectors.

"Airplane lavatory smoke detectors must be sensitive to cigarette smoke and proven to be reliable through testing. Detectors must be installed so that they cannot be disabled. This will eliminate the potential safety hazard created by passengers smoking in airplane lavatories," said Carla Winkler, President of UFA, "The FAA must set these standards."

The petition asks the Department of Transportation and the FAA, as members of the Interagency Group on International Aviation, to actively seek adoption by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) of a "standard" prohibiting smoking on all airline flights world-wide. It adds that, "While a world-wide smoking ban would be preferable in that it would protect the health and safety of all airline passengers, it is still incumbent upon the Federal Aviation Administration to protect, as soon as possible, the affected U.S. aviation employees and traveling public...from the hazards posed by smoking on board U.S. carriers."

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