

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2707

To help ensure general aviation aircraft access to Federal land and the
airspace over that land.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 8, 2000

Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. CRAIG, and Mr. BURNS) introduced the following
bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and
Natural Resources

A BILL

To help ensure general aviation aircraft access to Federal
land and the airspace over that land.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Backcountry Landing
5 Strip Access Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds as follows:

8 (1) The Secretary of the Interior and the Sec-
9 retary of Agriculture should adopt a nationwide pol-
10 icy for governing backcountry aviation issues related

1 to the management of Federal land under the juris-
2 diction of those Secretaries and should require re-
3 gional managers to adhere to that policy.

4 (2) Aircraft landing strips serve an essential
5 safety role as emergency landing areas.

6 (3) Aircraft landing strips provide access to
7 people who would otherwise be physically unable to
8 enjoy national parks, national forests, and other
9 Federal lands and serve an essential purpose in
10 search and rescue, firefighting, forest, and ecological
11 management, research, and aerial mapping.

12 **SEC. 3. PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERATION OF ACTIONS AF-**
13 **FFECTING AIRCRAFT LANDING STRIPS.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—Neither the Secretary of the Inte-
15 rior nor the Secretary of Agriculture shall take any action
16 which would permanently close or render or declare as un-
17 serviceable any aircraft landing strip located on Federal
18 land under the administrative jurisdiction of either Sec-
19 retary unless—

20 (1) the head of the aviation department of each
21 State in which the aircraft landing strip is located
22 has approved the action;

23 (2) notice of the proposed action and the fact
24 that the action would permanently close or render or

1 declare as unserviceable the aircraft landing strip
2 has been published in the Federal Register;

3 (3) a 90-day public comment period on the ac-
4 tion has been provided after the publication under
5 paragraph (2); and

6 (4) any comments received during the comment
7 period provided under paragraph (3) have been
8 taken into consideration by the Secretary of the In-
9 terior or the Secretary of Agriculture, as the case
10 may be, and the head of the aviation department of
11 each State in which the affected aircraft landing
12 strip is located.

13 (b) NATIONAL POLICY.—Not later than 2 years after
14 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
15 the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall—

16 (1) adopt a nationwide policy that is in accord-
17 ance with this Act for governing backcountry avia-
18 tion issues related to the management of Federal
19 land under the jurisdiction of those Secretaries; and

20 (2) require regional managers to adhere to that
21 policy.

22 (c) REQUIREMENTS FOR POLICIES.—A policy affect-
23 ing air access to an aircraft landing strip located on Fed-
24 eral land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the
25 Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture, including the pol-

1 icy required by subsection (b), shall not take effect unless
2 the policy—

3 (1) states that the Federal Aviation Adminis-
4 tration has the sole authority to control aviation and
5 airspace over the United States; and

6 (2) seeks and considers comments from State
7 governments and the public.

8 (d) MAINTENANCE OF AIRSTRIPS.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Inte-
10 rior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall consult
11 with—

12 (A) the head of the aviation department of
13 each State in which an aircraft landing strip on
14 Federal land under the jurisdiction of that Sec-
15 retary is located; and

16 (B) other interested parties,
17 to ensure that such aircraft landing strips are main-
18 tained in a manner that is consistent with the re-
19 source values of the adjacent area.

20 (2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Sec-
21 retary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agri-
22 culture may enter into cooperative agreements with
23 interested parties for the maintenance of aircraft
24 landing strips located on Federal land.

1 (e) EXCHANGES OR ACQUISITIONS.—Closure or pur-
2 poseful neglect of any aircraft landing strip, or any other
3 action which would render any aircraft landing strip un-
4 serviceable, shall not be a condition of any Federal acquisi-
5 tion of or exchange involving private property upon which
6 the aircraft landing strip is located.

7 (f) NEW AIRCRAFT LANDING STRIPS NOT CRE-
8 ATED.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to create
9 or authorize additional aircraft landing strips.

10 (g) PERMANENTLY CLOSE.—For the purposes of this
11 Act, the term “permanently close” means any closure the
12 duration of which is more than 180 days in any calendar
13 year.

14 (h) APPLICABILITY.—

15 (1) AIRCRAFT LANDING STRIPS.—This Act shall
16 apply only to established aircraft landing strips on
17 Federal lands administered by the Secretary of the
18 Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture that are
19 commonly known and have been or are consistently
20 used for aircraft landing and departure activities.

21 (2) ACTIONS, POLICIES, EXCHANGES, AND AC-
22 QUISSIONS.—Subsections (a), (c), and (e) shall
23 apply to any action, policy, exchange, or acquisition,
24 respectively, that is not final on the date of the en-
25 actment of this Act.

1 (i) FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION AUTHOR-
2 ITY NOT AFFECTED.—Nothing in this Act shall be con-
3 strued to affect the authority of the Federal Aviation Ad-
4 ministration over aviation or airspace.

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