Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations Materials

The FY2024 appropriations process may be a long and contentious one, given partisan and House and Senate differences on issues like the debt limit and federal spending priorities. Notwithstanding these broader issues, it is important to advocate for GAMA priorities in the appropriations process.

The GAMA FAA management priorities in appropriations align closely with the GAMA priorities in FAA reauthorization. Given uncertainties about the timing for passage of both bills, this dual advocacy is critical. We recommend that you advocate for the following priorities, especially with members of the appropriations committees in both chambers:

FY2024 Appropriations Request: Aircraft Certification Service (AIR) Funding

AIR activities are critical to ensuring safety oversight and FAA certification of commercial and general aviation products and technologies including advanced air mobility. If FAA funding is cut, the certification of safety-enhancing technologies will be impacted, and U.S. manufacturing jobs will be threatened as well as U.S. leadership in aviation.

The budget request for the FAA's AIR is $351.373M. We support this budget request to ensure sufficient funding and staffing and urge the Committee to put special emphasis on funding for Aircraft Certification Offices (ACOs) and the International Validation Branch (AIR-730) to accomplish vital certification and validation objectives.

FY2024 Appropriations Request: Regulatory Process Improvements Review

Delays in the promulgation of rulemaking, policies, and guidance have inhibited the progression of safety-enhancing aeronautical products through the certification system. Contributing to these delays is a large backlog of technical standards, policy memos, orders, and advisory circulars. The FAA's global aviation leadership is threatened by the inability to fully address its regulatory backlog.

We are suggesting that FAA conduct a comprehensive 90-day review of its regulatory processes and report its findings to Congress. The FAA should provide recommendations to improve the timeliness, transparency, and performance accountability in the promulgation of rules, regulatory policies, guidance, and other materials including the elimination of any redundant or unnecessary reviews and delays. (This has also been requested in FAA Reauthorization.)

FY2024 Appropriations Request: Future State of FAA Product Certification Study

The FAA needs to take action to start developing and defining a future state of aircraft certification to improve the resiliency and safety effectiveness of the process. That future state should consider that tomorrow's airworthiness engineers will be raised in an era when the use of advanced computing techniques are intuitively obvious, and a document centric approach no longer meets the need for accurate and timely presentation of data. Providing FAA with digital tools, including those that support model-based system engineering, would enable the regulator and industry to access aircraft models in real time as projects in certification evolve, advancing aviation safety.

We are asking Congress to fund an independent study of the FAA's certification system with a focus on future activities. The study would aim to foster continuous improvements in the certification system by identifying the digital and modeling requirements, and the necessary policy, procedures, and vision, to improve the safety and innovation of aircraft certification activities in the future. (This has also been requested in FAA reauthorization.)

FY2024 Appropriations request: FAA Environmental Research Funding

Funding for the Continuous Lower Energy, Emissions, and Noise (CLEEN) and Aviation Sustainability Center (ASCENT) is included in the FAA Research, Engineering, and Development Account, NextGen – Environmental Research – Aircraft Technologies and Fuels Budget Line. The FY24 budget request for this line is $70.8M and we support funding at this level.

The FAA's CLEEN program is a public-private partnership in which FAA and industry work together to develop technologies that will enable manufacturers to create aircraft and engines with less noise, fewer emissions, and improved fuel efficiency. Cumulatively, the first two phases of CLEEN are estimated to save the aviation industry more than 36 billion gallons of fuel by 2050 and lower CO_2 emissions by 424 million metric tons.

ASCENT, also known as the Center of Excellence for Alternative Jet Fuels and Environment, is a cooperative research organization composed of 16 leading U.S. research universities and more than 60 private sector stakeholders working to create science-based solutions to reduce aviation's environmental impact.