

Form No.: None.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved recordkeeping requirement:

Respondents: Certificated air carriers and public charter operators.

Number of Respondents: 130 certificated air carriers 350 public charter operators.

Total Annual Burden: 688 hours.

Needs and Uses: Part 249 requires the retention of such records as general and subsidiary ledgers, journals and journal vouchers, voucher distribution registers, accounts receivable and payable journals and ledgers, subsidy records documenting underlying financial and statistical reports to the Department, funds reports, consumer records, sales reports, auditors' and flight coupons, air waybills, etc. Depending on the nature of the document, it may be retained for a period of 30 days to 3 years. Public charter operators and overseas military personnel charter operators must retain documents which evidence or reflect deposits made by each charter participant and commissions received by, paid to, or deducted by travel agents, and all statements, invoices, bills and receipts from suppliers or furnishers of goods and services in connection with the tour or charter. These records are retained for 6 months after completion of the charter program.

Not only is it imperative that carriers and charter operators retain source documentation, but it is critical that we ensure that DOT has access to these records. Given DOT's established information needs for such reports, the underlying support documentation must be retained for a reasonable period of time. Absent the retention requirements, the documentary support for such reports may or may not exist for audit/validation purposes and the relevance and usefulness of carrier submissions would be impaired, since the data could not be verified to the source on a test basis.

Donald W. Bright,

Acting Director, Office of Airline Information, Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Agency Information Collection; Activity Under OMB Review; Report of Financial and Operating Statistics for Small Aircraft Operators—Form 298-C

AGENCY: Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) invites the general public, industry and other Federal Agencies to comment on the continuing need for and usefulness of BTS collecting financial, traffic and operating statistics from small certificated and commuter air carriers. Small certificated air carriers (operate aircraft with 60 seats or less or with 18,000 pounds of payload capacity or less) must file the five quarterly schedules listed below:

A-1 *Report of Flight and Traffic Statistics in Scheduled Passenger Operations,*

E-1 *Report of Nonscheduled Passenger Enplanements by Small Certificated Air Carriers,*

F-1 *Report of Financial Data,*

F-2 *Report of Aircraft Operating Expenses and Related Statistics,* and

T-1 *Report of Revenue Traffic by On-Line Origin and Destination.*

Commuter air carriers must file the three quarterly schedules listed below:

A-1 *Report of Flight and Traffic Statistics in Scheduled Passenger Operations,*

F-1 *Report of Financial Data,* and

T-1 *Report of Revenue Traffic by On-Line Origin and Destination.*

Commenters should address whether BTS accurately estimated the reporting burden and if there are other ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information collected.

DATES: Written comments should be submitted by March 6, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be directed to: Office of Airline Information, K-25, Room 4125, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001, fax # (202) 366-3383, or email bernard.stankus@bts.gov.

COMMENTS: Comments should identify the OMB # 2138-0009 and submit a duplicate copy to the address listed above. Commenters wishing the Department to acknowledge receipt of their comments must submit with those comments a self-addressed stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: Comments on OMB # 2138-0009. The postcard will be date/time stamped and returned to the commenter.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Bernie Stankus, Office of Airline Information, K-25, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 400 Seventh

Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001, (202) 366-4387.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

OMB Approval No. 2138-0009

Title: Report of Financial and Operating Statistics for Small Aircraft Operators—Form 298-C.

Form No.: 298-C.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Respondents: Small certificated and commuter air carriers.

Number of Respondents: 100.

Estimated Time Per Response: 16 hours for small certificated, 7 hours for commuters.

Total Annual Burden: 5,000 hours.

Needs and Uses: Program Uses of Form 298-C Data.

Mail Rates

The Department of Transportation (DOT) sets and updates the Intra-Alaska Bush mail rates based on carrier expense, traffic, and operational data. Form 298-C cost data, especially fuel costs, terminal expenses, and line haul expenses are used in arriving at rate levels. DOT revises the established rates based on the percentage of unit cost changes in the carriers' operations. These updating procedures have resulted in the carriers receiving rates of compensation that more closely parallel their costs of providing mail service and contribute to the carriers' economic well-being.

Essential Air Service

DOT also must determine a community's eligibility as an essential air service (EAS) point. If the community qualifies as an EAS point, a determination is made as to what level of service the community is entitled and how much, if any, compensation must be paid to air carriers that provide the service.

After DOT has determined that a community is eligible to receive EAS, DOT often has to select a carrier to provide the service. Some of the carrier selection criteria are historic presence in the community, reliability of carrier service, financial stability of the carrier, and carrier cost structure.

Carrier Fitness

Fitness determinations are made for both new entrants and established U.S. domestic carriers proposing a substantial change in operations. A portion of these applications consists of an operating plan for the first year (14 CFR Part 204) and an associated projection of revenues and expenses. The carrier's operating costs, included in these projections, are compared against the cost data in the Form 298-

C file for a carrier or carriers with the same aircraft type and similar operating characteristics. Such a review validates the reasonableness of the carrier's operating plan.

The quarterly financial submissions by commuter and small certificated air carriers are used in determining each carrier's continuing fitness to operate. Section 41738 of Title 49 of the United States Code requires DOT to find all commuter and small certificated air carriers fit, willing and able to conduct passenger service as a prerequisite to providing such service to an eligible essential air service point. In making a fitness determination, DOT reviews three areas of a carrier's operation: (1) The qualifications of its management team, (2) its disposition to comply with laws and regulations, and (3) its financial posture. DOT must determine whether or not a carrier has sufficient financial resources to conduct its operations without imposing undue risk on the traveling public. Moreover, once a carrier is operating as a commuter, DOT is required to monitor its continuing fitness.

Industry Analysis

The Secretary, Deputy Secretary and other senior DOT officials must be kept fully informed and advised of all current and developing economic issues affecting the airline industry. This is accomplished through the preparation of testimony given before Congressional committees, briefing and status papers, speech preparation, and memoranda recommending decisions or listing available options.

The analytical methodologies employed under this program are as varied as the nature of the particular aviation policy issues that confront senior DOT officials. In preparing financial condition reports or status reports on a particular airline, financial and traffic data are analyzed. Briefing papers may use the same information as well as airport activity data and market data. In summary, the nature of a particular aviation issue determines the particular methodology used to prepare the analysis.

Safety Analysis

The FAA evaluates the adequacy of aviation safety regulations, standards, policies and procedures. Problem areas are identified and recommendations are developed for appropriate solutions. Enplanement data are used in evaluating the safety status of carriers. Passenger-miles are used to calculate fatality and injury rates, while aircraft-miles are used in performing risk analysis and comparative analyses with

other traffic modes. Departure data are used to calculate accident/incident rates, developing rates of near misses, and assessing the significance of the incident of operational errors.

Forecasting

Traffic schedules are used to derive air carrier operations at non-tower airports. Historical aircraft departure data are used to supplement and validate other sources of Terminal Area Forecasts (TAF). The aircraft operations data in the TAF are needed by the National Plan of Integrated Airports System (NPIAS) to prepare airport master plans. In addition, aircraft operations forecast data in TAF are used in developing benefit/cost ratios for tower establishment and tower discontinuance criteria, for supporting decisions on the purchase of safety-related avionics equipment, and for the allocation of scarce resources for the construction or expansion of runways and other airport facilities.

Historical enplanement data are required to produce short, medium, and long range passenger demand forecasts for all airports with passenger service. These forecasts are presented in the TAF data base, which contains approximately 4,000 airports, including all airports in the NPIAS. TAF enplanement data are used in the preparation of various airport master plans and in response to requests for specific airport information from Congress, states, and the general public.

Historical passenger enplanement data, aircraft departure data, and freight and mail tons enplaned by airport are all used to project air carrier traffic and cargo activity levels for hub airports.

Cost/Benefit Analysis

Safety rules proposed by the FAA operating units are submitted for economic analysis. Under established costing methodologies, which use various cost and traffic data, accident data, and risk analysis, the proposed rules are evaluated on (1) a cost/benefit basis, (2) regulatory flexibility basis and, (3) an international trade impact basis.

Allocation of Airport and Airway Improvement Funds

A revenue passenger enplanement formula prescribed in the Airport and Airway Improvement Act is used to determine the amount of funds to be allocated to each airport. Form 298-C schedules that identify revenue passengers enplaned at individual airports in the United States and Trust Territories, are used for the formula.

Since several airports in the national system are heavily involved in air

freight, all-cargo data, such as revenue tons enplaned and aircraft departures, are used to plan for future needs of those airports. Scheduled aircraft departures by aircraft type by airport are used in determining the practical annual capacity (PANCAP) at airports, as prescribed in FAA Advisory Circular "Airport Capacity Criteria Used in Preparing the National Airport Plan." PANCAP is a safety-related benchmark measure which indicates when airport management should be concerned about capacity problems, delays and possible needed airport expansion or runway construction.

Noise Abatement

Air carrier traffic data by airport are used in assessing the level and frequency of service at individual airports in order to determine the environmental noise impact of carrier operations. Also, aircraft operating data are used to assess carrier compliance with noise abatement agreements.

Donald W. Bright,

*Acting Director, Office of Airline Information,
Bureau of Transportation Statistics.*

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Agency Information Collection; Activity Under OMB Review; Report of Extension of Credit to Political Candidates: Form 183

AGENCY: Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) invites the general public, industry and other Federal Agencies to comment on the continuing need for and usefulness of BTS collecting reports from air carriers on the aggregated indebtedness balance of a political candidate or party for Federal office. The reports are required when the aggregated indebtedness is over \$5,000 on the last day of a month.

DATES: Written comments should be submitted by March 6, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be directed to: Office of Airline Information, K-25, Room 4125, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001, FAX NO. (202) 366-3383 or EMAIL bernard.stankus@bts.gov.