

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) currently 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,*

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

On August 28, 2001, BTS published in the **Federal Register** (66 FR 45201) a notice of proposed rulemaking which recommends that small certificated and commuter air carriers report their traffic under the T-100 reporting system. If this proposal becomes a final rule, Form 298-C, Schedules A-1, E-1 and T-1 would be eliminated.

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 18, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be directed to: Office of Airline Information, K-25, Room 4125, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001, fax No. 366-3383 or e-mail bernard.stankus@bts.gov.

Comments: Comments should identify the OMB # 2138-0009. Persons 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bernie Stankus, Office of Airline Information, K-25, Room 4125, 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 No.: BTS Form 298-C.

Type Of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection for the financial data. The traffic data will be included under OMB Approval number 2138-0040.

Respondents: Small certificated and commuter air carriers.

Number of Respondents: 90.

Estimated Time per Response: 4 hours per commuter carrier; 12 hours per small certificated carrier.

Total Annual Burden: 2,880 hours.

Needs and Uses: Program uses for Form 298-C financial data are as follows:

Mail Rates

The Department of Transportation sets and updates the Intra-Alaska Bush mail rates based on carrier aircraft operating 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 often has to select a carrier to provide a community's essential air service. The selection criteria include historic presence in the community, reliability of service, financial stability and cost structure of the air carrier.

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 Form 298-C 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 begins conducting flight operations, DOT is required to monitor its continuing fitness.

Senior DOT officials must be kept fully informed and advised of all current and developing economic issues affecting the airline industry. In preparing financial condition reports or status reports on a particular airline, financial and traffic data are analyzed. Briefing papers prepared for senior DOT officials may use the same information.

Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act

DOT is using financial data reported by small certificated and commuter air carriers to establish benchmarks to assess the reasonableness of air carrier claims under the Stabilization Act.

Donald W. Bright,

*Assistant Director, 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
Large Certificated Air Carriers**

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 invites the general public, industry and other governmental parties to comment on the continuing need for and usefulness of the BTS Form 41. Comments are requested concerning whether (a) the continuation of Form 41 is necessary for DOT to carry out its mission of promoting air transportation; (b) BTS accurately estimated the reporting burden; (c) there are other ways to enhance the quality, use and clarity of the data collected; and (d) there are ways to minimize reporting burden,

including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

DATES: Written comments should be submitted by March 18, 2002.

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

Comments: Comments should identify the OMB # 2138-0013. Persons 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 # 2138-0013. The postcard will be date/time stamped and returned.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Bernie Stankus, Office of Airline Information, K-25, Room 4125, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001, (202) 366-4387.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

OMB Approval No.: 2138-0013.

Title: Report of Financial and Operating Statistics for Large Certificated Air Carriers.

Form No.: BTS Form 41.

Type Of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Respondents: Large certificated air carriers.

Number of Respondents: 75.

Estimated Time per Response: 4 hours per schedule, an average carrier may submit 90 schedules in one year.

Total Annual Burden: 27,000 hours.

Needs and Uses: Program uses for Form 41 data are as follows:

Mail Rates

The Department of Transportation sets and updates the international and mainline Alaska mail rates based on carrier aircraft operating expense, traffic and operational data. Form 41 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.

Submission of U.S. Carrier Data to ICAO

As a party to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, the United States is obligated to provide the

International Civil Aviation Organization with financial and statistical data on operations of U.S. air carriers. Over 99 percent of the data filed with ICAO is extracted from the carriers' Form 41 reports.

Standard Foreign Fare and Rate Levels

DOT uses Form 41 cost data to calculate the Standard Foreign Fare Level (SFFL) for passengers and the Standard Foreign Rate Level (SFRL) for freight. Any international fare or rate set below this fare level are automatically approved. Separate passenger fare and rate levels are established for Canadian, Atlantic, Latin America, and Pacific areas. In markets where liberal bilateral or multilateral pricing agreements provide for more competitive open market pricing, such agreements may take precedence over the SFFL and SFRL.

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 Form 41 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.

Form 41 reports, particularly balance sheet reports and cash flow statements play a major role in the identification of vulnerable carriers. Data comparisons are made between current and past periods in order to assess the current financial position of the carrier. Financial trend lines are extended into the future to analyze the continued viability of the carrier. 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, DOT is required to monitor its continuing fitness.

Senior DOT officials must be kept fully informed as to all current and developing economic issues affecting the airline industry. In preparing financial conditions reports or status reports on a particular airline, financial

and traffic data are analyzed. Briefing papers may use the same information.

War Air Service Program (Emergency Preparedness)

Under the War Air Service Program (WASP), FAA develops an official airline guide to establish air carrier boarding priorities in the event of a national emergency. The inventory of aircraft available for WASP equals the total aircraft fleet operated by certificated air carriers less the number of the largest wide-body aircraft that are allocated to the Civil Reserve Aircraft Fleet Program. Data on air carrier aircraft inventories, plus interim updates of acquisitions and retirements are used to assess the air transportation capabilities of the U.S. airline industry. This assessment is used in developing plans for emergency utilization of U.S. airline industry aircraft and resources in the event of a national emergency and/or mobilization.

Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act

DOT is using Form 41 financial data to establish benchmarks to assess the reasonableness of air carrier claims under the Stabilization Act.

Donald W. Bright,

*Assistant Director, Airline Information,
Bureau of Transportation Statistics.*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Internal Revenue Service

Proposed Collection; Comment Request for Form 2553

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Treasury, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Currently, the IRS is soliciting comments concerning Form 2553, Election by a Small Business Corporation.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before March 18, 2002, to be assured of consideration.