

(June 22, 2007) Opening Statement from the Federal Aviation Research & Development Reauthorization

OPENING STATEMENT

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Vice Chair, U.S. House Committee on Science and Technology

"H.R. 2698, Federal Aviation Research and Development Reauthorization Act of 2007"

Friday June 22, 2007

As a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation, I want to emphasize the importance of this bill to the future of our air transportation system.

In order to improve the safety and efficiency of aviation and limit harm to the environment, it is critical that we invest in research and development. Through the development of new technologies, such as unleaded gasoline for general aviation piston aircraft, we will be able to meet both near-term and long-term aviation goals and objectives in a more environmentally sustainable manner.

Currently, general aviation piston aircraft operate on 100 Octane leaded aviation gasoline, or avgas. Avgas contains four times the amount of lead found in the already-banned leaded automotive fuel and is extremely toxic. Unfortunately, no economical alternative currently exists. Environmental concerns over this leaded gasoline will only continue to grow as use of these planes increases.

In order to address this issue, I worked with Chairman Gordon and Chairman Udall to include in this bill a provision to continue and enhance R&D for alternative aviation fuels. This provision, which authorizes \$750,000 for fiscal years 2008

through 2010, will help to expedite the development, testing, and approval of an economical, environmentally-friendly alternative aircraft fuel. Ideally, aircraft would soon be able to switch to such a fuel with limited modifications to their engines.

Increasing R&D for alternative aircraft fuels is crucial if we hope to hasten their introduction into the market and, in doing so, help protect our environment. I would like to thank Chairmen Gordon and Udall for all their work on this bill and for including this important environmental provision.