



P R E S S R E L E A S E

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

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FAA pilot fatigue rule is a step in the right direction, but misses the mark on “One Level of Safety”

(DALLAS) — Today the Federal Aviation Administration released final regulations regarding airline pilot flight and duty time limitations and minimum rest requirements. The FAA’s changes to these long-standing rules were prompted by the February 2009 crash of Colgan Air Flight 3407. This effort is the culmination of millions of hours of research and collaboration by scientists and industry experts.

Southwest Airlines Pilots’ Association President, Capt. Steve Chase said, “While the pilots of Southwest Airlines are the most productive in the industry, we recognize the need for an update to rules that have been in place for the past 50 years. However, SWAPA has made it clear throughout this process that we would only offer our support to a ruling that promotes the ‘One Level of Safety’ that the FAA originally mandated.”

Most of the current rules have been in effect prior to 1960. The increased capability of aircraft since that time has vastly changed pilots’ working dynamic and environment. The ruling includes an exemption for cargo carriers, such as UPS and FedEx, which would allow companies to force their pilots to continue to operate under the previous and outdated regulations. These are the same regulations that triggered the FAA’s mandate of “One Level of Safety.”

“Cargo pilots are no less susceptible to fatigue than passenger pilots,” Capt. Chase said. “Our crew members and the passengers they carry operate in the same airspace as cargo operators. Bystanders on the ground are no less affected by an accident if an aircraft is carrying boxes rather than people. It is our hope that lawmakers will reconsider the cargo carrier exemption and ensure that legislation meets the original intent of ‘One Level of Safety.’”

Located in Dallas, Texas, the Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association (SWAPA) is a non-profit employee organization representing the more than 6,000 pilots of Southwest Airlines. SWAPA works to provide a secure and rewarding career for Southwest pilots and their families through negotiating contracts, defending contractual rights and actively promoting professionalism and safety. For more information on the Southwest Airlines Pilots’ Association, visit www.swapa.org. # # #