



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0100-2002, **Version:** *

Res. No. 100

Resolution calling upon the United States House of the Representatives to hold hearings on the safety of the Airbus A-300-600, other aircraft and the adequacy of pilot training programs.

By Council Members Martinez, Addabbo, Avella, Fidler, Foster, Jackson, Jennings, Monserrate, Quinn, Rivera, Serrano, Brewer, Oddo and The Public Advocate (Ms. Gotbaum); also Council Member Sears

Whereas, On November 12, 2001, at approximately 9:17 A.M., American Airlines Flight 587 took off from Kennedy International Airport bound for Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic; and

Whereas, Several minutes later the Airbus A-300-600 crashed in Belle Harbor, New York and all 260 persons on board and five persons on the ground died; and

Whereas, The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) in the course of its investigation has determined "that sequential full opposite rudder inputs" known as rudder reversals "can produce loads ...that may exceed the structural capabilities of the aircraft;" and

Whereas The NTSB made its finding known in a safety recommendation to Jane Garvey, Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration on February 8, 2001; and

Whereas, According to The New York Times of February 19, 2002 in its article "After Crash, Experts Review How to Instruct on Rudder Use," the NTSB has "singled out the possibility" the crash was brought on by "a rapid wagging" of the airplane's rudder as "its pilots encountered another aircraft's wake" compelling aviation experts to review "what forces jetliners can withstand;" and

Whereas, According to Aviation Week and Space Technology of January 21, 2002 in its article "Did Rudder Motions Snap Off A300 Fin?," Flight 587 is the first time in civilian transport history that a vertical stabilizer "came completely off due to aerodynamic loads. It is on the order of the one-in-a-billion-flight-hours safety rate" set by Federal Aviation Regulations.

Whereas, The NTSB's approach to a crash has a dual purpose of seeking the exact cause of the accident, and in addition giving its attention to the more comprehensive task of determining potential causes in order that all the hazards might be mitigated; and

Whereas, The NTSB has found just such a potential hazard in the danger from rudder reversals; and

Whereas, The NTSB, in its initial recommendation, concluded that an industry-wide problem existed that affect planes manufactured by Airbus and other companies; and

Whereas, This initial recommendation is not a determination of the probable cause of the accident, and the investigation continues; and

Whereas, The NTSB in its recommendation notes that existing certification requirements in 14 CFR Part 25, Subpart C section 25.351 titled "Yaw Maneuver Conditions" test an airplane for loads after the rudder is turned in one direction followed by "a release of that rudder input" but do not "consider a full rudder movement in one direction followed by a movement in the opposite direction;" and

Whereas, Dangerous structural stress can occur at even low rates of speed; and

Whereas, At normal cruising speed, a mechanical device inhibits rudder movement and usually requires heavy pressure on the rudder pedal to move it a small distance, but an equivalent pedal pressure on an Airbus traveling at a low rate of speed, when its mechanical device is not operating, will produce a full rudder swing and potential disaster; and

Whereas, The pedal pressure that moves the rudder varies with the type of aircraft and pilots must be aware of these differences and pilots must be trained in these difference so that they know what pedal pressures must be applied at different speeds; and

Whereas, The NTSB fully recognizes that proper training must instruct pilots when to be cautious, without making them "reluctant to command full rudder ... when appropriate such as during an engine failure shortly after takeoff or during strong and gusty crosswinds at takeoff or landing;" and

Whereas, New standards are developing for responding to terrorist takeovers of an airplane that may require pilots to use full flight control authority including rudder deflection "as a way to disable or incapacitate would-be hijackers;" and

Whereas, Pilot training may not be a sufficient response, but an examination of problems particular to the construction and design of the Airbus and other aircraft may also be necessary; and

Whereas, The FAA is now in a position to issue new rules; now, therefore, be it

Resolved That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States House of the Representatives to hold hearings on the safety of the Airbus A-300-600, other aircraft and the adequacy of pilot training programs.

[1013]