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August 22, 2017

The Honorable Michael Huerta, Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta,

I write today to request prioritization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) rulemaking to update regulations governing aviation maintenance technician schools (Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 147). I am encouraged to see the FAA recognize the need to modernize and reorganize these important regulations in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Notice No. 15-10) and I believe the FAA should focus efforts to complete the rulemaking process efficiently.

Part 147 is long-overdue for modernization; in fact, the regulations pertaining to aviation maintenance technical education curricula requirements have not been significantly updated since 1963. In the meantime, the FAA has restructured aircraft design and maintenance rules to enhance aviation safety and integrate constantly changing technology. Nonetheless, despite the need for more sophistication and knowledge from maintenance personnel, part 127 remains outdated and incapable of meeting industry demands for highly-skilled aviation maintenance workers.

Both industry and government agree that current part 147 requirements inhibit maintenance technician schools from keeping up with changes in aircraft technology. Schools are mandated by law to teach skills that do not prepare students for jobs available post-graduation, and industry must bear the cost to retrain these graduates to complete basic tasks required to maintain a modern, sophisticated aircraft.

Outdated part 147 mandates hinder the aviation maintenance industry's ability to compete and grow. As the global aviation sector expands, U.S. maintenance companies are unable to meet increased demand because of a significant skilled worker shortage. Modernizing part 147 will allow aviation maintenance technician schools to produce the most qualified workers possible, benefiting the broader aviation sector and enhancing the competitiveness of the U.S. maintenance industry.

I request you continue on the course identified in the Notice of Proposed rulemaking and accomplish those objectives as quickly as possible as the FAA can effectively carry-out this duty. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

In compliance with this request, the attached communication is submitted for your consideration, and I ask that the request made therein be granted, if possible.

Please advise me of your action in this matter. If you require additional information, please contact Michael Ciminna at my New Port Richey office at (727) 843-1068 or fax (727) 232-2923.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gus M. Bilirakis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "G".

Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress