

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 5, 2013

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

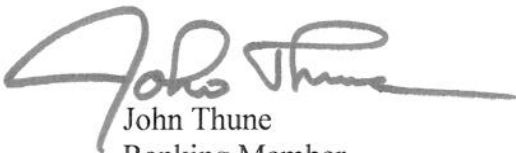
Dear Administrator Huerta:

We applaud your recent efforts to expand the use of certain portable electronic devices for passengers on commercial airliners. As airlines gain approval from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), passengers are enjoying a convenience in airline travel that has become commonplace elsewhere, without compromising safety or unnecessarily disturbing other passengers. As you are likely aware, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently announced a plan to go a step beyond the FAA's recent actions on portable electronic devices by reviewing the current ban on the use of cell phones for voice communication in-flight.

Well before the FCC's announcement, Section 410 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-95, enacted February 14, 2012) directed the FAA to study the impact of the use of cell phones for voice communications in-flight and report to Congress by November 10, 2012, on the findings, as well as public reaction. Specifically, the law directed the FAA to evaluate the extent of cell phone use, and the policies governing such use, in foreign air carrier service where the use of cell phones for voice communications is permitted by foreign governments. The provision also called on the FAA to summarize the impacts of cell phones for voice communication on safety, the quality of the flight experience for passengers, and flight attendants.

As the FCC considers moving forward with a Notice of Proposed Rule Making at the December 12, 2013, full commission meeting, the results of the FAA's overdue study and report are particularly pertinent to Congress and the American public. We request that you transmit this timely and overdue report to our Committees as soon as possible. If the report will not be completed by the end of the year, we request that you provide an explanation for the delay and a date certain by which the report will be completed.

Sincerely,



John Thune
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation



Bill Shuster
Chairman
House Committee on
Transportation and Infrastructure

SEC. 410. USE OF CELL PHONES ON PASSENGER AIRCRAFT.

(a) Cell Phone Study- Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall conduct a study on the impact of the use of cell phones for voice communications in an aircraft during a flight in scheduled passenger air transportation where currently permitted by foreign governments in foreign air transportation.

(b) Contents- The study shall include--

(1) a review of foreign government and air carrier policies on the use of cell phones during flight;

(2) a review of the extent to which passengers use cell phones for voice communications during flight; and

(3) a summary of any impacts of cell phone use during flight on safety, the quality of the flight experience of passengers, and flight attendants.

(c) Comment Period- Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall publish in the Federal Register the results of the study and allow 60 days for public comment.

(d) Cell Phone Report- Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the results of the study.