

2. MassDEP's petition to intervene is granted.

3. Interested parties may submit new or supplemental comments by March 28, 2014. Replies to those comments are due by April 14, 2014.

4. This decision is effective on its service date.

By the Board, Chairman Elliott and Vice Chairman Begeman.

**Derrick A. Gardner,**  
Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2014-04624 Filed 2-28-14; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4915-01-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Bureau of Transportation Statistics

[Docket ID Number RITA 2008-0002]

#### Agency Information Collection; Activity Under OMB Review; Report of Financial and Operating Statistics for Small Aircraft Operators

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics invites the general public, industry and other governmental parties to comment on the continuing need for and usefulness of BTS collecting financial, traffic and operating statistics from small certificated and commuter air carriers. Small certificated air carriers (operate aircraft with 60 seats or less or with 18,000 pounds of payload capacity or less) currently must file the two quarterly schedules listed below:

F-1 *Report of Financial Data,*

F-2 *Report of Aircraft Operating Expenses and Related Statistics,* and  
Commuter air carriers must file the Schedule F-1 *Report of Financial Data.*

Commenters should address whether BTS accurately estimated the reporting burden and if there are other ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected.

**DATES:** Written comments should be submitted by May 2, 2014.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Marianne Seguin, Office of Airline Information, RTS-42, Room E34-418, RITA, BTS, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590-0001, Telephone Number (202) 366-1457, Fax Number (202) 366-3383 or EMAIL [marianne.seguin@dot.gov](mailto:marianne.seguin@dot.gov).

*Comments:* Comments should identify the associated OMB approval #2138-

0009 and Docket ID Number RITA 2008-0002. Persons wishing the Department to acknowledge receipt of their comments must submit with those comments a self-addressed stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: Comments on OMB #2138-0009, Docket—RITA 2008-0002. The postcard will be date/time stamped and returned.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*OMB Approval No.* 2138-0009.

*Title:* Report of Financial and Operating Statistics for Small Aircraft Operators.

*Form No.:* BTS Form 298-C.

*Type of Review:* Extension of a currently approved collection for the financial data.

*Respondents:* Small certificated (29) and commuter air carriers (24).

Schedule F1:

*Number of Respondents:* 53.

*Number of Annual Responses:* 212.

*Total Burden per Response:* 4 hours.

*Total Annual Burden:* 848 hours.

Schedule F2:

*Number of Respondents:* 29.

*Number of Annual Responses:* 116.

*Total Burden per Response:* 12 hours.

*Total Annual Burden:* 1,392 hours.

*Needs and Uses:* Program uses for

Form 298-C financial data are as follows:

#### Mail Rates

The Department of Transportation sets and updates the Intra-Alaska Bush mail rates based on carrier aircraft operating expense, traffic, and operational data. Form 298-C cost data, especially fuel costs, terminal expenses, and line haul expenses are used in arriving at rate levels. DOT revises the established rates based on the percentage of unit cost changes in the carriers' operations. These updating procedures have resulted in the carriers receiving rates of compensation that more closely parallel their costs of providing mail service and contribute to the carriers' economic well-being.

#### Essential Air Service

DOT often has to select a carrier to provide a community's essential air service. The selection criteria include historic presence in the community, reliability of service, financial stability and cost structure of the air carrier.

#### Carrier Fitness

Fitness determinations are made for both new entrants and established U.S. domestic carriers proposing a substantial change in operations. A portion of these applications consists of an operating plan for the first year (14 CFR Part 204) and an associated

projection of revenues and expenses. The carrier's operating costs, included in these projections, are compared against the cost data in Form 298-C for a carrier or carriers with the same aircraft type and similar operating characteristics. Such a review validates the reasonableness of the carrier's operating plan.

The quarterly financial submissions by commuter and small certificated air carriers are used in determining each carrier's continuing fitness to operate. Section 41738 of Title 49 of the United States Code requires DOT to find all commuter and small certificated air carriers fit, willing, and able to conduct passenger service as a prerequisite to providing such service to an eligible essential air service point. In making a fitness determination, DOT reviews three areas of a carrier's operation: (1) The qualifications of its management team, (2) its disposition to comply with laws and regulations, and (3) its financial posture. DOT must determine whether or not a carrier has sufficient financial resources to conduct its operations without imposing undue risk on the traveling public. Moreover, once a carrier begins conducting flight operations, DOT is required to monitor its continuing fitness.

Senior DOT officials must be kept fully informed and advised of all current and developing economic issues affecting the airline industry. In preparing financial condition reports or status reports on a particular airline, financial and traffic data are analyzed. Briefing papers prepared for senior DOT officials may use the same information.

The Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (44 USC 3501 note), requires a statistical agency to clearly identify information it collects for non-statistical purposes. BTS hereby notifies the respondents and the public that BTS uses the information it collects under this OMB approval for non-statistical purposes including, but not limited to, publication of both Respondent's identity and its data, submission of the information to agencies outside BTS for review, analysis and possible use in regulatory and other administrative matters.

Issued on February 25, 2014.

**Rolf R. Schmitt,**

*Deputy Director, Bureau of Transportation Statistics.*

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