



May 6, 2011

The Honorable John L. Mica
Chairman, Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mica,

As leading representatives of America's business community, we are writing to express strong concerns about the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) plan to dramatically limit the Block Aircraft Registration Request (BARR) program and urge that the final bill to reauthorize the FAA include language to continue the program as it exists today. Specifically, our members strongly support Section 817 of HR 658.

The Block Aircraft Registration Request (BARR) program allows business aircraft operators with privacy or security concerns for their operations to request that Aircraft Situation Display to Industry (ASDI) data provided to the Federal Aviation Administration be blocked from public dissemination. These requests are routinely honored, and FAA has provided no data to demonstrate that such massive changes are needed in the program

FAA's plan to restrict the BARR program would be an unwarranted invasion of privacy, a threat to the competitiveness of U.S. companies, and a potential risk to persons traveling on a general aviation aircraft. Our members utilize all modes of transportation in the conduct of their business. The use of an aircraft is absolutely essential in meeting a portion of their transportation challenges. Anything that singles out aircraft use for separate and punitive treatment is damaging to our economic recovery.

Privacy of movement is a fundamental American value. We believe the federal government should, to the greatest extent possible, protect such information rather than transmit it to anyone in the world with a computer connection. With this proposal, the government is targeting for broadcast the movements of those individuals and companies who utilize general aviation airplanes, but the situation could just as easily involve individuals and companies who utilize an automobile with an E-Z Pass. We do not believe there is any mode of transportation where the public dissemination of private movements is warranted.

It should also be understood that, in addition to raising serious privacy concerns, the government's plan to limit the BARR program threatens the competitiveness of American businesses. Companies in the United States are operating in a fiercely competitive world. Transmitting the private movements of U.S. companies to competitors facilitates corporate espionage and decreases the ability of American companies to compete.

Finally, the government's plan represents a significant security risk. The federal government should reject proposals that would facilitate the electronic stalking of Americans and American companies.

In short, the BARR is a program that has worked well for more than a decade, because it protects the safety and security of individuals and businesses. That the government would seek to undermine such a valuable safeguard without even setting forth profound public policy for doing so runs counter to the values and best interests of America and American businesses.

Sincerely,

Business Roundtable
National Association of Manufacturers
U.S. Chamber of Commerce