



News from the ALPA FEDEX MEC

Air Line Pilots Association, International

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December 22, 2011

FedEx Pilots Respond to Release of Pilot Fatigue Rule

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — *The FedEx Master Executive Council (MEC), the FedEx branch of the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA), issued the following press release concerning the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) final regulations regarding airline pilot flight- and duty-time limitations and minimum rest requirements.*

The release yesterday of the Federal Aviation Administration's long-awaited science-based fatigue rule for flight and duty time was a political failure. The rule completely ignores the safety of cargo pilots and instead, lets operators choose to ignore the safety improvements that will benefit pilots carrying passengers.

Fatigue affects all pilots. Over the first century of powered flight, countless accidents trace pilot fatigue as a contributing factor. "It is outrageous that the new rule does not include cargo. Cargo aircraft operate into the same airspace, into the same crowded airports surrounded by millions of homes and face the same challenges every other professional aviator encounters on a 24-hour basis," said FedEx MEC Chairman Scott Stratton.

An NTSB spokesman summed it up well: "*A tired pilot is a tired pilot, whether there are 10 paying customers on board or 100, whether the payload is passengers or pallets.*" As the FAA said in its draft, "*Fatigue threatens aviation safety because it increases the risk of pilot error that could lead to an accident.*" This is particularly a concern for crews that fly "*on the back side of the clock.*" Ironically, the back side of the clock is exactly where the majority of cargo pilots find themselves operating aircraft.

The families of the pilots and passengers who perished on the Colgan Air Flight 3407 operated as Continental Connection accident brought the issue of pilot fatigue to the forefront. Initially, Congress and the FAA acted to address pilot fatigue. However, cargo carrier lobbyists were able to use a protracted backroom process to convince federal policy-makers that somehow cargo pilots and their families were less worthy of fatigue protection. The FedEx MEC is outraged at the casual dismissal of cargo pilots and their families. Industry commenters asserted that, "*while a passenger-operation accident can result in numerous fatalities, an all-cargo accident would consist primarily of property damage.*" The FAA apparently

placed some value in this absurd statement and coldly used it to justify the subjugation of cargo families. “This nonsense indicates the character of the political process that produced this rule,” said MEC Chairman Captain Scott Stratton. “It is clear that special interest money and politics won over safety today, but we will not sit idly by and allow another 50 years of ambivalence to take hold. Our work to achieve a single level of safety as envisioned by the founding members of the Air Line Pilots Association, International shall continue. There can be no “Scheduling with Safety” without “One Level of Safety.”

Founded in 1931, ALPA is the world's largest pilot union, representing more than 53,000 pilots at 37 airlines in the United States and Canada. Visit the ALPA website at www.alpa.org.

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