

determinations is ordered to be published in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information, including a description of the exhibit object, contact Paul W. Manning, Attorney-Adviser, Office of the Legal Adviser, 202/619-5997, and the address is United States Department of State, SA-44, Room 700, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547-0001.

Dated: June 23, 2003.

C. Miller Crouch,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 03-16591 Filed 6-30-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710-08-P

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 4388]

Culturally Significant Objects Imported for Exhibition; Determinations: "The Crau at Ales: Peach Trees in Flower"

AGENCY: Department of State.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the following determinations: Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985; 22 U.S.C. 2459), Executive Order 12047 of March 27, 1978, the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (112 Stat. 2681, *et seq.*; 22 U.S.C. 6501 note, *et seq.*), Delegation of Authority No. 234 of October 1, 1999 (64 FR 56014), and Delegation of Authority No. 236 of October 19, 1999 (64 FR 57920), as amended, I hereby determine that the object to be included in the exhibition, "The Crau at Ales: Peach Trees in Flower," imported from abroad for temporary exhibition within the United States, is of cultural significance. The object is imported pursuant to a loan agreement with a foreign lender. I also determine that the exhibition or display of the exhibit object at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California, from on or about August 5, 2003, to on or about January 13, 2004, and at possible additional venues yet to be determined, is in the national interest. Public Notice of these determinations is ordered to be published in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information, including a description of the exhibit object, contact Paul W. Manning, Attorney-Adviser, Office of the Legal Adviser, 202/619-5997, and the address is United States Department of State, SA-44, Room 700, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547-0001.

Dated: June 23, 2003.

C. Miller Crouch,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 03-16590 Filed 6-30-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710-08-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

[Docket No. FAA-2003-15495]

Weight-Based Restrictions at Airports: Proposed Policy

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of proposed policy; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice requests comments on a proposed statement of policy on the use of weight-based airport access restrictions as a means of protecting airfield pavement. In grant agreements between an airport operator and the FAA for Federal airport development grants, the airport operator makes certain assurances to the FAA. These assurances include an obligation to provide access to the airport on reasonable, not unjustly discriminatory terms to aeronautical users of the airport. Some airport operators have implemented restrictions on use of the airport by aircraft above a certain weight, to protect pavement not designed for aircraft of that weight. These actions have raised the question of when such an action is a reasonable restriction on use of the airport. In the interest of applying a uniform national policy to such actions, the FAA is publishing for comment a draft policy on weight-based access restrictions at federally obligated airports.

DATES: Comments must be received by August 15, 2003. Comments that are received after that date will be considered only to the extent possible.

ADDRESSES: The proposed policy is available for public review in the Dockets Office, U.S. Department of Transportation, Room Plaza 401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. The documents have been filed under FAA Docket Number FAA-2003-15495. The Dockets Office is open between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The Dockets Office is on the plaza level of the Nassif Building at the Department of Transportation at the above address. Also, you may review public dockets on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Comments on the proposed policy must be delivered on mailed, in duplicate, to: the Docket Management System, U.S. Department of Transportation, Room Plaza 401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. You must identify the docket number "FAA Docket No FAA-2003-15495" at the beginning of your comments. Commenters wishing to FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments must include a preaddressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made:

"Comments to FAA Docket No. FAA-2003-15495." The postcard will be date stamped and mailed to the commenter. You may also submit comments through the Internet to <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

James White, Deputy Director, Office of Airport Safety and Standards, AAS-2, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC 20591, telephone (202) 267-3053.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Airport operators that accept federal airport development grants under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), 49 U.S.C. 47101 *et seq.*, enter into a standard grant agreement with the FAA. That agreement contains certain assurances, including assurance no. 22, based on the requirement in 49 U.S.C. 47107(a)(1). Grant assurance no. 22 reads, in part:

a. [The sponsor] will make the airport available as an airport for public use on reasonable terms and without unjust discrimination to all types, kinds and classes of aeronautical activities, including commercial aeronautical activities offering services to the public at the airport.

At the same time, the FAA expects that airport sponsors will protect airfield pavement from damage or early deterioration. Many airport projects funded with the AIP grants involve pavement. As a result, both the FAA and airport sponsors have a significant investment in airfield pavement, and an interest in assuring that pavement remains in acceptable condition for its design life, normally at least 20 years. The policy of assuring reasonable access to the airport and the interest in protecting the investment in airfield pavement are both extremely important, but it is clear that they can potentially work against each other in a particular case.

In February 2002, the Airports Division in an FAA regional office issued a preliminary determination on the ability of a particular airport operator to limit use of the airport according to aircraft weight. In that case the weight limit effectively prohibited operation by aircraft heavier than the

aircraft considered in the design of the airport's pavement. The FAA found, in summary, that the airport operator could limit use above the design weight of the pavement, but that some operations above that weight could and should be permitted, because they would have no measurable effect on the pavement. The FAA has received several questions relating to the policy underlying that determination.

In view of the importance of the policies at stake, we believe it is appropriate to issue more specific guidance on the specific issue of weight-based access restrictions.

The policy proposed in this notice provides more detailed guidance on how the FAA will interpret Grant Assurance No. 22, in cases in which an airport sponsor limits operation by aircraft above a certain weight in order to preserve the integrity of airport pavement. The FAA requests comment on the following statement of policy, and may modify the policy in accordance with comments received on this notice. For any cases presented before a final policy is issued, the FAA will apply the policy as proposed in this notice.

For the above reasons, the FAA proposes to adopt the following policy:

Operating Limitations to Protect Airport Pavements From the Effects of Operations in Excess of Design Weight-Bearing Capacity

1. When designing new airport pavement or rehabilitating existing pavement, airport operators design the pavement to accommodate the loads and frequencies of the aircraft expected to use the airport over the period of expected pavement life. A load-bearing capacity is then assigned to the pavement based upon the most demanding aircraft. Once that pavement is constructed, airport operators have a responsibility to protect the local and Federal investment in the pavement. At the same time, airport operators are encouraged to upgrade airport pavements for forecast increases in aircraft size or operations, or if the number of operations and size of aircraft increase over time beyond what was forecast.

2. Airport pavements are designed to accommodate a finite number of aircraft operations, based on planning forecasts and experience. In most cases it should not be necessary or appropriate to impose aircraft operating restrictions to protect pavement from occasional operations of aircraft which exceed the published pavement strength. Even in the exceptional case in which the mix of aircraft types using the pavement

becomes heavier over time, a limitation on maximum weight of aircraft may not be warranted. It is the nature of airport pavement to begin a gradual deterioration process as soon as it is opened to traffic. A pavement designed for a specified number of operations by an aircraft type of a particular weight will not be immediately affected by some number of operations by heavier aircraft, up to a point. In general, each 10% increase in weight of the most demanding aircraft will decrease the number of design operations by 20–25%. The original load-bearing capacity of pavement may be increased by surface overlays or other pavement rehabilitation techniques. Therefore, some number of operations by aircraft exceeding the design load-bearing capacity of airport pavement by some degree will ordinarily not have a sufficient impact to shorten its useful life. (The Airport/Facility Directory introductory language notes that “[m]any airport pavements are capable of supporting limited operations with gross weights of 25–50% in excess of the published figures.”).

3. However, where the airport operator reasonably believes that actual damage or excessive wear has resulted or would result from operation of aircraft of a particular weight (and particular gear configurations), then the airport operator can limit those operations to the extent necessary to prevent that damage or excessive wear.

4. The design load-bearing capacity of pavement is a guide to the probability of adverse effects on pavement life. Design load-bearing capacity is demonstrated by planning and engineering documents created at the time the pavement was designed, constructed, rehabilitated or improved. Testing to determine actual load-bearing capacity may be appropriate or necessary where design information is unavailable or does not appear to represent actual current condition of the pavement.

5. Any action by the airport operator to limit operations above the design load-bearing capacity must be reasonable and unjustly discriminatory, and would require evidence of the effect of operations at certain weights on the pavement. Such limitations, if determined to be necessary, could include:

- Requiring particular taxi routes and parking areas for aircraft above a certain weight, to avoid weaker areas;
- Requiring prior permission for operation by aircraft above the design load-bearing capacity of the pavement (see examples in Exhibit 1);

- Permitting operations of such aircraft only up to a certain weight;
- Prohibiting all operations by aircraft exceeding a weight at which even a small number of operations would significantly reduce pavement life.
- Assigning heavy aircraft a particular runway (through agreement with Air Traffic Control) if operationally feasible.

Operating procedures, such as requiring use of designated taxiways and ramp parking areas, are preferable to an outright ban or limit on the number of operations. A limit on the number of operations and/or weight of operations must be based on an analysis of pavement life using known pavement design capacity, actual load-bearing capacity, and actual condition. That analysis can be performed with the AAS-100 Pavement Design Software, based on Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5320-6D, available on the FAA Airports web site. An analysis is also required to assess the load-carrying capacity of existing bridges, culverts, in-pavement light fixtures, and other structures affected by the proposed traffic. Such structures are generally not capable of supporting a single load application above design limits, and may preclude any operations by heavier aircraft unless other taxi routes can be specified. Guidance for those evaluations is stated in AC 150/5320-6D.

6. The airport operator may avoid any issue of reasonable, nondiscriminatory access to the airport by accommodating current operations and bringing pavement up to the standard for the current use of the airport as the condition of the pavement requires.

7. This policy applies only to pavement weight-bearing capacity and pavement condition, and does not apply to geometric airport design standards.

8. This policy applies only to the purpose of protecting an airport operator's investment in pavement, and is not a substitute for noise restrictions. If there is no showing of need to protect pavement life, or the limit on airport use appears motivated by interest in mitigating noise without going through processes that exist for such restrictions, an attempt to limit aircraft by weight will be considered unreasonable. The FAA notes that there are a few existing noise rules that include weight categories, generally adopted before ANCA and the AAIA were enacted. Issues arising under those rules will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Examples

Airport operators may experience demand for use of the airport by aircraft that weigh more than the design load-bearing capacity of the airport

pavement. In some cases that demand can adversely affect pavement condition. Ideally the airport operator should accommodate demand by upgrading facilities. If that option is not practical, the airport operator can permit reasonable access by these aircraft, while avoiding adverse effects on existing pavement, by regulating the number and maximum weight of operations on a prior-permission-required basis. The number and maximum weight of operations permitted would vary according to the specific circumstances at each airport, including:

- Pavement load-bearing capacity.
- The mix of aircraft operating at the airport. The heavier the aircraft, the fewer operations it takes to have an effect on pavement life.
- Seasonal effects on pavement strength, for example wet or dry subgrade conditions or very low or high pavement temperatures.

The following scenarios are not recommendations but simply examples of limitations that might be appropriate in particular circumstances. Local conditions may require more complex solutions. An engineering analysis will be required in each case.

Scenario 1

The airport pavement is designed to 60,000 lb. dual-wheel load. Pavement design and soil support conditions are known. Operations up to 60,000 lb. are unrestricted, and the issue is how many flights should be permitted above that weight.

The airport receives frequent operations by several aircraft types at 70,000 lb., and occasional operations at 105,000 lb., but very few operations by other aircraft types in between those weights.

Reference to AC 150/5320-6D shows that on an annual basis up to xxxx operations at 70,000 lb. and xx operations at 105,000 lb. together would have no measurable effect on the life of the pavement, but more operations at either weight would begin to shorten pavement life.

The operator could require prior permission for operations above 60,000 lb. Permission would be granted on a first-come first-served basis, for xx (xxxx/52) operations per week up to 70,000 lb. and for x (xx/52) operations per week up to 110,000 lb.

Scenario 2

The airport pavement is designed to 100,000 lb., with dual-wheel gear configuration. Pavement design and soil support conditions are known.

Most operations at the airport are well under 100,000 lb., but the airport receives regular operations by various types of aircraft at weights from 100,000 lb. up to 135,000 lb. Operations up to 100,000 lb. are unrestricted, and the issue is how many flights should be permitted above that weight.

Reference to AC 150/5320-6D shows that on an annual basis various assortments of operations above 100,000 lb. can operate without measurable effect on the life of the pavement. However, there is no single "right" combination, because more operations at one weight will reduce the number that can be permitted at another weight. Also, each flight at the heavier end of the scale, e.g., 135,000 lb., has a disproportionately adverse effect equal to several flights at the lower end of the scale, e.g., just above 100,000 lb.

There may be many ways to allocate limited operating rights for the various types of aircraft that would use the airport over time, while controlling the maximum cumulative stress on the airport's pavement. One way would be to allocate operating permission by "points" rather than by number of operations. While the numbers actually used would need to be validated using AC 150/5320-6D, something like the following could be used:

Each operation 100,001 lb. to 110,000 lb.; 1 point.

Each operation 110,001 lb. to 120,000 lb.; 2 points.

Each operation 120,001 lb. to 130,000 lb.; 4 points.

Each operation 130,001 lb. to 140,000 lb.; 6 points.

If AC 150/5320-6D indicated that no combination of operations equal to an annual usage of 1200 points would have an adverse effect on pavement life, then the airport operator could allocate 23 points a week with no adverse effects.

The operator would require prior permission for operations above 100,000 lb. Permission would be granted on a first-come first-served basis, until the weekly allocation of points was assigned.

Issued in Washington, DC on June 20, 2003.

David L. Bennett,
Director, *Airport Safety and Standards.*
[FR Doc. 03-16462 Filed 6-30-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

National Park Service

Membership in the National Parks Overflights Advisory Group

AGENCIES: National Park Service and Federal Aviation Administration.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: By *Federal Register* notice published on April 28, 2003, the National Park Service (NPS) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), asked interested persons to apply to fill a vacant position representing aviation interests on the National Parks Overflights Advisory Group (NPOAG). This notice informs the public of the person selected to fill that vacancy on the NPOAG.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Barry Brayer, Executive Resource Staff, Western Pacific Region Headquarters, 15000 Aviation Blvd., Hawthorne, CA 90250, telephone: (310) 725-3800, Email: Barry.Brayer@faa.gov, or Howie Thompson, Natural Sounds Program, National Park Service, 12795 W. Alameda Parkway, Denver, Colorado, 80225, telephone: (303) 969-2461; Email: Howie.Thompson@nps.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000 (the Act) was enacted on April 5, 2000, as Public Law 106-181. The Act required the establishment of the advisory group within 1 year after its enactment. The NPOAG was established in March 2001. The advisory group is comprised of a balanced group of representatives of general aviation, commercial air tour operations, environmental concerns, and Native American tribes. The Administrator and the Director (or their designees) serve as ex officio members of the group. Representatives of the Administrator and Director serve alternating 1-year terms as chairman of the advisory group.

The advisory group provides "advice, information, and recommendations to the Administrator and the Director—

(1) on the implementation of this title [the Act] and the amendments made by this title;

(2) on commonly accepted quiet aircraft technology for use in commercial air tour operations over a national park or tribal lands, which will receive preferential treatment in a given air tour management plan;