U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

800 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

February 12, 2013

The Honorable Claire McCaskill
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCaskill:

Thank you for your December 11, 2012, letter about the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) rules on in-flight use of portable electronic devices (PEDs). I share your interest in taking a fresh look at these rules.

As you know, we are working with aircraft operators, electronic and aircraft manufacturers, passenger advocacy groups, other Federal Government agencies, and related associations to better assess whether expanding the use of PEDs during all phases of flight is appropriate while maintaining the highest levels of safety to passengers and aircraft.

Current FAA regulations require an aircraft operator to determine that radio frequency interference from PEDs is not a flight safety risk and does not interfere with on-board navigation or communication systems before the operator authorizes them for use during certain phases of flight. However, aircraft operators are only allowing the use of PEDs during some phases of flight on board the aircraft.

With all of this in mind, we are pursuing two courses of action. First, we have requested public comments on this subject and, second, we have established the PED Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC) to address the issue and make recommendations to further clarify and provide guidance on allowing additional PED usage without compromising the continued safe operation of the aircraft.

Public Comments: On August 28, 2012, the FAA asked for public input on key areas of policy and guidance in use today by aircraft operators when making these determinations. We received comments from individual citizens, airline operators, aircraft and avionics manufacturers, associations, and other industry groups. We are still reviewing and evaluating the more detailed comments for the ARC.

Aviation Rulemaking Committee: The ARC is made up of representatives that reflect the broad range of interests around the use of PEDs onboard aircraft, including those that support relaxing the current rules. It will examine the current PED policies and procedures aircraft operators use to determine when these devices can be used safely during flight. The ARC's first meeting was

held on January 15. The government-industry group reviewed the public comments provided during the first meeting and will use that information to help examine a variety of issues, including the testing methods aircraft operators use to determine which new technologies passengers can safely use aboard aircraft and when they can use them. The group will also look at the establishment of technological standards associated with the use of PEDs during any phase of flight. The ARC will not consider the use of cell phones for voice communications during flight because the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) currently prohibits that use through its regulation of the radio spectrum. I have enclosed the list of companies and organizations involved for your reference. The ARC will meet for 6 months and then present its recommendations to the FAA.

If you need further assistance, please contact me or Roderick D. Hall, Assistant Administrator for Government and Industry Affairs, at (202) 267-3277.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Huerta
Administrator

Enclosure

Portable Electronic Device Aviation Rulemaking Committee

Stakeholder Group	Company
Aircraft Manufacturer and Associations	Aerospace Industries Association
	Airbus
	Boeing Commercial Airplanes
	Cessna Aircraft Company
Airlines, Operators and Associations	American Airlines
	Delta Air Lines
	Executive Jets Management, Inc.
	Helicopter Association International
	Jet Blue
	Lufthansa Systems
	Regional Airline Association
Avionics Manufacturer and Associations	Garmin
	General Aviation Manufacturing Association
	Rockwell Collins
	Thales Avionics
Government	Federal Aviation Administration
	Federal Communication Commission
	Transportation Safety Administration
Passenger Representatives	Airline Passenger Experience Association
	National Association of Airline Passengers
Pilots and Flight Attendants	Air Line Pilots Assoc. International
	Association of Flight Attendants
Portable Electronics Manufacturers	Amazon (Kindle)
	Consumer Electronics Association
	OnAsset Cargo Tracking
	Apple