On January 31, 2020, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) implemented a temporary Air Traffic procedure change at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) in response to requests from the United States Secret Service to address national security concerns. The temporary procedure, known as HOLTB, moved one waypoint 784 feet to the southwest to move north-flow departing aircraft away from protected airspace above the National Mall and the White House (P-56), while still keeping aircraft over the Potomac River. The temporary procedure is intended to determine the effectiveness of the amended waypoint in reducing the number of incursions into P-56. The FAA is inviting comments from the public on environmental concerns about the temporary procedure.

Based on the initial results of the temporary procedure, the FAA is tentatively planning to permanently implement the amended waypoint for all north-flow departures at DCA. The permanent implementation would amend the following procedures: HORTO4, CLTCH3, JDUBB4, SOOKI5, DOCTR5, REBLL5, WYNGS5, SCRAM6, the AMEEE1 will be published and replace the HOLTB1 and BOOCK3 which will be canceled. The BWI CONLE4 and IAD JOBY4 are being amended for the new AMEEE1, but changes consist of a waypoint name change and a transition above 18,000 AGL. The FAA is inviting comments from the public on environmental concerns they believe the FAA should consider as part of its environmental review of the proposed action pursuant to FAA Orders 1050.1F, Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures and other applicable authorities.

To assist the public, the FAA has made the following documents available for review: 1) the FAA’s noise screen which analyzed the noise impacts of the proposed amendment and concluded there would be no reportable or significant noise impacts from the changes; 2) the FAA’s Section 106 letter to the Historic Preservation Officers for the State of Maryland, State of Virginia, and the District of Columbia, which contains the FAA’s finding that no historic properties would be affected by permanent implementation of the amendment pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4(d); and 3) radar track data depicting where aircraft fly under the temporary amended procedure compared to the unamended procedure.

The FAA’s public comment period will run from February 27, 2020 until March 30, 2020. Comments from the public can be submitted electronically by accessing the projects electronic mailbox:9-ATO-DCA-HOLTB-SID-Comments@faa.gov or by accessing the following website: https://dev-www.faa.gov/air_traffic/community_involvement/dca_p56/. An electronic copy of the documents referenced above can be accessed at the website above. Comments can also be physically mailed to: Federal Aviation Administration, ATTN: AJV-E25, 1701 Columbia Avenue, College Park, GA 30337.