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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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SUBCOMMITTEE

September 19, 2005

Mr. Quentin Burgess
Manager, Federal Aviation Administration
Department of Transportation
800 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 1022
Washington, DC 20591-0001

RE: Mr. Richard Wheldon
Turbine Aircraft Services, Inc.
4550 Jimmy Doolittle Drive
Addison, Texas 75001
Air-worthiness of the MU-2

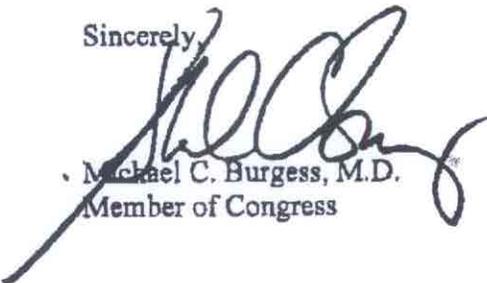
Dear Mr. Burgess:

The enclosed communication is submitted for your every review and consideration that is consistent with the applicable laws and regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration. The most relevant points have been highlighted for your convenience.

Should you have any questions about this inquiry or if I can provide you with any additional information, please contact Janice Zimmerman of my staff in my district office at (972) 434-9704. To avoid delays in receiving your response, you may prefer to forward your reply via Facsimile to (972) 434-9705. In addition, **please direct all correspondence about this inquiry to my district office.**

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,


Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Member of Congress

MB/jz
Enclosure



September 13, 2005

Congressman Michael Burgess
1660 South Stemmons Freeway
Suite 230
Lewisville, TX 75067

Dear Congressman Burgess,

I am Vice-President of Turbine Aircraft Services, Inc., a general aviation company operating out of San Angelo and Addison, Texas. My home address is [REDACTED]. My company operates two MU-2 aircraft and consults with the airplane's manufacturer, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. Our consulting activities include numerous programs designed to promote the safe operation of the MU-2.

The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention a misguided and unwarranted attempt by certain litigants to bring political pressure to bear and to use the FAA as a tool to ground the MU-2. I will try to concisely summarize the facts as I know them.

Two MU-2 aircraft crashed in Colorado during this last 12 months. In the first, an engine failure apparently occurred just after takeoff. According to the NTSB's preliminary report, the pilot successfully shut down the engine, climbed to a safe altitude, and attempted to return to the airport. On the approach, he misjudged the wind, flew past the runway, and apparently got slow and stalled the airplane. This mistake was fatal to the pilot and his cockpit observer. In the second accident, in weather, the airplane crashed south of the runway while configured to land and with the wings level. This strongly implies that the airplane was under full control and that a navigational error was the cause.

While I cannot speak for the NTSB, a cursory review of the preliminary reports for these accidents reveals that they will probably be classified as pilot error.

The FAA recently posted an "Airworthiness Concern Sheet" requesting comments about MU-2 controllability. This sheet reported that the FAA was conducting a Safety Evaluation Investigation and stated that loss of control appeared to be the cause of many MU-2 accidents. The sheet was not distributed to the FAA's database of MU-2 owners, but instead was sent to general aviation aircraft operators groups, who in turn passed it on to our company. The distribution date was September 2, 2005 (the Friday before a holiday weekend). We did not receive it until the following Tuesday afternoon, and the period for comments was closed on September 12, less than a week later. Allowing less than one week for comment on a potential grounding of the MU-2 fleet, which could possibly make our investment in the MU-2 valueless, is thoughtless, careless, or perhaps more something more malevolent.

The Safety Evaluation Investigation was prompted by letters from the two Colorado Senators and four Colorado Congressmen demanding that the MU-2 be grounded, according to a column in the Atlantic Flyer, a trade journal (www.aflyer.com). I have not seen copies of the letters, except for one that was published in the Atlantic Flyer purportedly written by Congressman Tom Tancredo. In it, the congressman cites an Atlantic Flyer columnist as an MU-2 expert (that columnist has, by his own admission, never flown an MU-2, although he has strong opinions about it!) and uses language found on the web site of a Dallas area plaintiff's attorney who may have signed up one of the Colorado accident victims families. Both the columnist and the attorney were quoted in the local Colorado newspapers immediately following each MU-2 crash, representing themselves as MU-2 experts and not revealing any conflicts of interests.

The MU-2 was originally certified in Japan and accepted into the United States under bilateral agreement. Subsequently, it underwent another certification in the United States. The certification was reviewed by the

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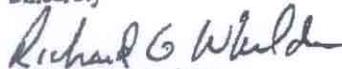
FAA extensively in 1983, and again in 1996. None of these reviews revealed any design flaws! To my knowledge, no other airplane has undergone such comprehensive and rigorous oversight.

If the Colorado congressmen, the plaintiff's attorney, the columnist, and the FAA succeed in grounding the MU-2 fleet, they will deprive my company of the use of these essential assets and cause great economic harm to us and to the approximately 300 other MU-2 owners in the United States. In today's "blame someone else" society, this would be fundamentally wrong. Just as most traffic accidents ultimately are caused by the driver making a mistake, the same holds true for airplanes. Pilot's mistakes are to blame in approximately 75% of all aircraft accidents. We know through many years of ownership that the MU-2 is a fine and safe aircraft which we operate conservatively and prudently. We train regularly and maintain our airplanes properly, and we have responsibly decided to own and operate these airplanes in a safe manner. I strongly urge you to make a stand against undue government interference and register your opinions with the FAA against this action.

Before closing, let me describe my qualifications. I am a Navy trained pilot with a degree in Aerospace Engineering from the Naval Academy. I have logged nearly 5000 pilot in command hours in the MU-2. With my engineering background, I have the specialized knowledge and skills to evaluate the stability and control of the MU-2. I have NEVER noted any dangerous flight characteristics with this airplane. I chose to train annually in the simulator and maintain our airplanes at a factory approved maintenance facility. While these actions do not, by themselves, guarantee that I will never have an accident, I am certain that they will tip the odds dramatically in my favor. It is no small coincidence that the pilots of only 3 of the 18 fatal accident airplanes over the last 12 years had successfully completed simulator training. It is also no small coincidence that neither of the Colorado accident pilots was simulator trained.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss these issues or any related issues. I can come to Washington or to your Texas offices, and can make our airplanes available in either location to demonstrate them to you or your aides.

Sincerely



Richard G. Wheldon
(972) 248-3108 x 209


wheldon3@turbineair.com

cc: Mr. Tom Berscheidt



Dr. Michael C. Burgess
United States Congressman
Representing Texas' 26th Congressional District

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FAX COVER SHEET

FAX: (972) 434-9705

DATE: September 19, 2005

TO: Mr. Quentin Burgess, FAA (DC)

ATTENTION: Quentin Burgess

FAX #: (202) 267-8210

SUBJECT: Richard Wheldon
Turbine Aircraft Services, Inc
MU-2

PAGES: 4, including cover sheet

FROM: Janice Zimmerman, Director of Constituent Services

COMMENTS:

The information contained in this facsimile message is to be considered privileged, confidential, and is intended ONLY for the use of the individual named above.
If there are any problems with the transmission of this fax, please contact:
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