

OPENING STATEMENT
The Honorable Ralph M. Hall (R-TX), Chairman
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Markup of H.R. 970, *The Federal Aviation Research and Development*
Reauthorization Act of 2011

March 17, 2011

Today our committee will consider H.R. 970, The Federal Aviation Research and Development Reauthorization Act of 2011. The bill was introduced on March 9 and referred to our Committee.

H.R. 970 authorizes Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Research and Development (R&D) programs for fiscal years 2011 through 2014. For Fiscal Year 2011, the authorization amount is a hybrid of the current R&D spending level and the Fiscal Year 2008 enacted. For Fiscal Years 2012 through 2014, the bill authorizes at the 2008 enacted level.

Many of the provisions in H.R. 970 have been adapted from FAA R&D bills considered during the previous two Congresses and should be well known to FAA and the aviation community. They are focused and essential policy initiatives that will sustain the excellent research now underway at FAA, including research on unmanned aircraft systems, design for certification, alternative jet fuel technologies, and aviation's effect on the environment.

Last month, under the leadership of Chairman Palazzo, the Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee held an oversight hearing on FAA's research and development program. Witnesses from FAA, industry, an external advisory committee to FAA, and the Inspector General of the Department of Transportation, testified about ongoing research activities and their effectiveness in supporting the agency's diverse missions.

It should not come as a surprise that frequent mention was made of the Next Generation Air Transportation System program, which is by far the largest development program underway at FAA as it endeavors to modernize the air traffic control system. Discussions were also heard about research important to the general aviation community and the operation of unmanned aircraft systems in our national airspace.

As Members are aware, once H.R. 970 is reported by our Committee, it is our expectation our bill will be included as part of the larger FAA reauthorization bill, H.R. 658, which was recently reported by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

As the Committee with the expertise in civil aviation research and development activities, it is important that we develop this piece of the larger package.

H.R. 658 reauthorizes the Federal Aviation Administration except for the R&D programs. It covers the same four year period and holds the agency's budget to the FY08 spending level. By reporting the bill before us this morning, we will ensure that the broader FAA reauthorization bill will include an R&D title, thus enabling the agency's goals of increasing the capacity, efficiency, safety and reliability of our nation's civil aviation system through a robust research and development program.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 970, and I now recognize the gentlelady from Texas for an opening statement.