

the provisions of these rules to that equipment in order to ensure access. We also ask commenters to address whether failure to bring such equipment within the scope of section 255 would create a serious gap in coverage that would interfere with our ability to effectively implement its provisions. Commenters should offer suggestions as to the appropriate role for the Commission in ensuring access for this kind of equipment and the statutory basis for that role. We also ask about the potential for this kind of equipment for improving accessibility and its compatibility with assistive technology. Is it possible that greater levels of accessibility will be readily achievable if this kind of equipment has accessibility requirements?

IV. Procedural Matters

11. Pursuant to §§ 1.415 and 1.419 of the Commission's rules, interested parties may file comments as follows: Comments may be filed using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) or by filing paper copies.

12. Comments filed through the ECFS can be sent as an electronic file via the Internet to <http://www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html>. Generally, only one copy of an electronic submission must be filed. If multiple docket or rulemaking numbers appear in the caption of this proceeding, however, commenters must transmit one electronic copy of the comments to each docket or rulemaking number referenced in the caption. In completing the transmittal screen, commenters should include their full name, Postal Service mailing address, and the applicable docket or rulemaking number. Parties may also submit an electronic copy by Internet e-mail. To get filing instructions for e-mail comments, commenters should send an e-mail to ecfs@fcc.gov, and should include the following words in the body of the message: "get form <your email address>." A sample form and directions will be sent in reply.

13. Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and four copies of each filing. If more than one docket or rulemaking number appears in the caption of this proceeding, commenters must submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number. All paper filings must be sent to the Commission's Secretary, Magalie Roman Salas, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 445 Twelfth Street S.W., Room TW-A325, Washington, DC 20554.

14. Parties who choose to file by paper should also submit their

comments on diskette to Al McCloud, Network Services Division, Common Carrier Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, 445 Twelfth Street SW, Room 6-A423, Washington, DC 20554. Such a submission should be on a 3.5 inch diskette formatted in an IBM-compatible format using WordPerfect 5.1 for Windows or a compatible software. The diskette should be accompanied by a cover letter and should be submitted in read-only mode. The diskette should be clearly labeled with the commenter's name, proceeding, including the lead docket number in the proceeding (CC Docket No. 96-198), type of pleading (comment or reply comment), date of submission, and the name of the electronic file on the diskette. The label should also include the following phrase (Disk Copy—Not an Original.) Each diskette should contain only one party's pleadings, preferably in a single electronic file. In addition, commenters should send diskette copies to the Commission's copy contractor, International Transcription Service, Inc., 1231 20th St. NW, Washington, DC 20037.

15. Alternate formats (computer diskette, large print, audio cassette and Braille) are available to persons with disabilities by contacting Martha Contee at (202)418-0260 (voice), (202)418-2555 (TTY), or at mcontee@fcc.gov. The Further Notice of Inquiry can be downloaded in Wp or ASCII test at: <http://www.fcc.gov/df/>.

V. Ordering Clauses

16. The authority contained in sections 1, 2, 4, 201(b), 208, 251(a)(2), 255, and 303(r) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. 151, 152, 154, 201(b), 208, 251(a)(2), 255, 303(r), this Notice of Inquiry IS ADOPTED and comments ARE REQUESTED.

Federal Communications Commission.

William F. Caton,

Deputy Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

49 CFR Ch. I

Office of the Secretary

[Docket OST-1996-1880]

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Air Travel

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: DOT is convening a public meeting to discuss whether the Department should commence a rulemaking to require certain additional accommodations for hearing-impaired passengers under the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986. This notice announces the date, time, location, and procedures for the public meeting.

DATES: The public meeting is scheduled for November 30, 1999, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST.

ADDRESSES: The public meeting will be held in Room 2101 at the Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sophy Chen, Office of the Assistant General Counsel for Regulation and Enforcement, telephone number (202) 366-9353 or via email at sophy.chen@ost.dot.gov; or Robert Ashby, Deputy Assistant General Counsel for Regulation and Enforcement, telephone number (202) 366-9310 (voice) or (202) 755-7687 (TDD), or via email at bob.ashby@ost.dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

In a November 1996 notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), the Department proposed to amend the Department's Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) rules regarding seating accommodations for individuals with disabilities and the stowage of collapsible electric wheelchairs (61 FR 56481; November 1, 1996). In that NPRM, the Department also requested comments on the following four suggestions the Department had received regarding accommodations for persons with hearing impairments: (1) Captioning of video material (e.g., movies and other entertainment features) shown on the aircraft; (2) making telecommunications devices for the deaf (TDDs) available where air phone service is provided to other passengers; (3) providing assistive listening technology for public address announcements in the aircraft; and (4) providing electronic message or assistive listening technology in gate areas. The Department sought comments on the need for such accommodations, as well as their technical feasibility and cost.

The Department received several comments, which are available in Docket OST-1996-1880. The Department's dockets are available at DOT Headquarters, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC, in Room PL-104 and can also be accessed at the Department's Docket Management

System Internet site (<http://dms.dot.gov>). In the preamble for the final rule that resulted from the November 1996 rulemaking, however, the Department deferred decision on whether to require these accommodations for hearing-impaired passengers. At this time, the Department seeks to reopen discussion about these suggestions.

Meeting Procedures

1. To reserve a seat or to ensure that you have the opportunity to speak, please contact Sophy Chen (see information under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) as soon as possible. The meeting is otherwise open for observation without prior

arrangement. Seating, however, will be restricted by room size and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

2. The meeting will be structured so that a balanced group of interested parties are the primary participants. However, opportunities for anyone in attendance to speak will be made available as well. For scheduling purposes, anyone wishing to make a short presentation highlighting technologies that are relevant to making air travel accessible for hearing-impaired individuals are encouraged to contact Sophy Chen (see information under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) as soon as possible.

3. The purpose of the meeting is to solicit views and more complete information on the need, feasibility, and cost of the suggested accommodations for hearing-impaired air travelers. The meeting will be conducted, therefore, in an informal and non-adversarial manner. No individual will be subject to cross-examination by any other participant. Panel members may, however, ask questions to clarify statements and to ensure a complete and accurate record.

Issued in Washington, DC on November 10, 1999.

Rosalind A. Knapp,

Deputy General Counsel.

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