October 19, 2015

Gary A. Norek
Manager, Airspace Policy and Regulations Group
U.S. Department of Transportation
Docket Operations, M–30
West Building Ground Floor, Room W12–140
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Subject: FAA Docket No. FAA–2015–2776 and Airspace Docket No. 15–AEA–5

Dear Mr. Norek:

The Wallops Island Regional Alliance (WIRA) respectfully extends its sincere thanks for the opportunity to review the proposal for the above subject that was published in *The Federal Register* on September 10, 2015.

WIRA is an established non-profit group consisting of more than 250 businesses, business leaders, and private citizens.

WIRA fosters and supports the missions of the United States government and related organizations situated at Wallops Island, Virginia. Agencies of the United States government at Wallops Island include the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), United States Navy (USN), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Those United States government agencies and related organizations along with their respective civilian contractors employ approximately 1,800 personnel at Wallops Island.

On the Delmarva peninsula, WIRA is the largest single independent support organization, and the Wallops Island facilities have the largest single concentration of high tech employees.

WIRA strongly supports the prompt adoption of the above subject proposed rule for expanding the restricted airspace at Chincoteague Inlet, Virginia. This restricted airspace expansion is needed to safely accommodate existing and future operational requirements associated with the United States government agencies at Wallops Island.

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Those operational requirements serve an extremely vital role in national security, national defense, and national protection of life and property from weather events.

Expansion of the restricted airspace is not precedent setting and does not adversely affect aircraft enroute operations.

Here's why.

The proposed restricted areas R-6604D and R-6604E abut, but do not include, the existing enroute low altitude airway V-139. If either or both of those two restricted areas are in use, then air traffic can continue to flow unimpeded on V-139.

Similar conditions already exist elsewhere without adversely affecting enroute air traffic conditions.

For example, near the Atlantic coastline in Georgia, the major north-south enroute low altitude airway V-37 abuts prohibited area P-50. Prohibited area P-50 overlies the USN nuclear submarine base at Kings Bay, Georgia, located just to the north of the town of St. Mary's.

Also, near the Atlantic coastline in Florida, the major north-south enroute low altitude airway V-3 passes through restricted area R-2935. Restricted area R-2935, intermittent in use, is associated with operations at the NASA Kennedy Space Center.

The proposed restricted areas at Chincoteague Inlet, Virginia are to be intermittent in use. When the restricted areas are not in use, then aircraft can pass through those areas without prior permission. NASA Wallops Flight Facility already allows uninterrupted aircraft passage through the existing restricted areas R-6604A and R-6604B when either or both are not in use.

No private-use airports exist in the proposed restricted areas R-6604D and R-6604E. Should a private-use airport later be established, then typically a coordinated plan for its

beneficial use is instituted. Such private-use airports exist harmoniously in numerous locations within existing restricted areas across the United States.

Thus, allowing the expansion of the restricted airspace does not adversely affect enroute air traffic flow and is beneficial to the safety and operational requirements of the United States government facilities at Wallops Island.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

WALLOPS ISLAND REGIONAL ALLIANCE

Peter J. Bale
Chairman

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