

## NATCA APPLAUDS HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE'S SUPPORT FOR AN ANALYSIS OF SEPARATION STANDARDS BETWEEN AIRCRAFT

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National Air Traffic Controllers Association praised what it called a "major boost" from Congress last week on examining aircraft separation standards, which it said would free up unused airspace capacity. The House Appropriations transportation subcommittee, in approving DOT funding, provided \$1 million to begin a "serious analysis and modeling of the potential to reduce separation standards between aircraft." Controllers earlier this year proposed a study.

NATCA President John Carr said controllers are "looking forward to working with the subcommittee, FAA and all interested parties on this issue...This will go a long way to improving the capacity of the system while maintaining its standing as the safest in the world. "Carr told the subcommittee March 15 that the current separation standards, which date to the 1940s and '50s, were basically agreed on due to limitations in radar and equipment. "Any marginal, fractional decrease in separation standards has to be measured against the litmus test of safety but could instantly free up unused capacity in the system," he said at the time. Carr met in April with Professor John Hansman from MIT, who also is evaluating current separation standards. "His data show that while separation standards have remained unchanged, radar performance has improved five-fold."