



February 16, 2005

Federal Aviation Administration
Central Terminal Operations, AGL-520
2300 East Devon Avenue, Room 247
Des Plaines, IL 60018

Attn: J. Mark Reeves
Manager, Airspace Branch,

Re: FAA Air Case Number 04-AGL-63-NR

Dear Mr. Reeves:

This is to express the strong opposition of the United States Ultralight Association ("USUA") to the eight proposed Military Operations Areas ("MOAs") in Southern Indiana. We believe that the proposed MOAs will create a mix of aircraft operations that is extremely unsafe.

USUA is a non-profit corporation, and is the nation's largest ultralight flying association, with over 5,500 members nationwide. USUA's members are individuals who operate ultralight aircraft and light-sport aircraft. Over 300 of these members reside in this region and will be directly impacted by the proposed MOAs.

Our members are predominantly owners and operators of "ultralight" aircraft. The term, as it is used in the Federal Aviation Regulations ("FARs"), applies to any vehicle, powered or un-powered, which meets the definitions of Part 103 of the Federal Aviation Regulations. The term includes powered ultralights (fixed wing, rotorcraft, powered parachutes, etc.) and un-powered ultralights (hang gliders, paragliders, sailplanes, balloons, etc.). The FARs restrict weight, speed, and fuel capacity for ultralights. The FARs currently define ultralights to be to single-seat craft with exemptions for two-seat craft that are used for instructional purposes only. In general, ultralights are quite light and they ordinarily travel relatively slow and at low altitudes.

We have reviewed the notice dated October 22, 2004 outlining FAA's proposed establishment of several new MOAs in Southern Indiana in response to a request from the United States Air Force. It appears that the plan is to establish four new MOAs associated with the Atterbury Range/R3401A/B airspace complex and four new MOAs associated with the Jefferson Range R3403A/B complex. USUA is deeply concerned that the proposed MOAs will create a mix of aircraft traffic that is simply not safe.

It appears to USUA that if FAA establishes the MOAs, this action will concentrate high-speed military traffic into an area that is currently heavily used by ultralights. As you are likely aware, Indiana has become very active with ultralight operations. The terrain, weather and availability of rural areas make Indiana an ideal area for ultralights.



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The FARs restrict most ultralight operations to the period between sunrise and sunset. Most operations are conducted at low altitudes and low airspeeds in rural areas. By their very nature, ultralight operations are concentrated in the areas of the proposed MOAs. Establishing these MOAs will mix high-speed military traffic with these ultralights during the daylight hours at altitudes down to 500 feet. In fact, USUA selected the Scottsburg Aero Club of Scottsburg, Indiana as the host for the 2004 National Microlight Championships. The championships lasted for one week in September and were attended by hundreds of individuals from across the United States, thereby boosting the local Scottsburg economy significantly. We also hope to conduct other competitions and events in the Scottsburg area. However, from a review of the area where you propose to implement the MOAs, it is apparent that the proposal incorporates the airspace that was utilized by ultralights flying to and from the championships, as well as during the championships.

Our concern about the unsafe mix of aircraft is heightened because of the difficulty we have in determining when a MOA is active. We realize that, while the MOAs are proposed to be effective for approximately 15 hours a day, they generally will be used significantly less than that. However, we have no reliable method for receiving "real-time" information about when the airspace is active. Ultralights will have no option but to avoid the airspace. Deviating around blocks of airspace the size of these MOAs in a traditional aircraft is a significant problem, but deviating around them in an ultralight that travels at less than 70 miles per hour is a huge problem.

Additionally, as you know, FAA has recently created a new category of aircraft, Light Sport Aircraft. These aircraft will, like ultralights, be quite light and will generally travel low and slow. This new program has provided a method in which an even greater number of ultralight pilots, as well as present and former general aviation pilots, can access the sky in ways that were never before provided. FAA estimates that over 15,000 of these Light Sport Aircraft will be transitioned into the system over the next few years. This new program, as defined in FAR Parts 61 and 91, has been designed to revitalize general aviation, and provide a safer, easier, less expensive access to aviation. To achieve this goal, FAA, with the cooperation of USUA and the ultralight community, has gone to great lengths and expense to design, and implement this new program. Since this region of the country has historically been an active airports area, many of these new "Sport Pilots" would be using the airspace affected by this proposal. The Scottsburg vicinity, with its vast ultralight and airports history, could potentially become a leading area in Light Sport Aviation.

In summary, USUA is very concerned that if FAA establishes the proposed MOAs, it will create an extremely unsafe condition. The area is currently a very active one for ultralight operations. Ultralights are light, and travel at low speeds and at low altitudes. The proposed MOAs will introduce high-speed military traffic into the same airspace these light aircraft are currently using.

For the reasons outlined above, USUA respectfully requests that FAA reconsider the establishment of the MOAs outlined in FAA Air Case Number 04-AGL-63-NR. While we appreciate the need for a proficient Air Force, we believe that the mix of aircraft traffic that will be created is extremely unsafe.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Very truly yours,



Dale Hooper
Executive Vice President,
United States Ultralight Association, Inc. (USUA)



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