



Billing Code 4910-9X

## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **Bureau of Transportation Statistics**

**[Docket ID Number DOT-OST-2014-0031]**

**Agency Information Collection; Activity Under OMB Review; Report of Financial and Operating Statistics for Small Aircraft Operators**

**AGENCY:** Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology (OST-R), Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces that the Information Collection Request (ICR) abstracted below is being forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for extension of currently approved collection. The ICR describes the nature of the information collection and its expected burden. The Federal Register Notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on the following collection of

information was published on January 23, 2018 (83 FR 15, Page 3257).

No comments were received.

**DATES:** Written comments should be submitted by (INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Marianne Seguin, Office of Airline Information, RTS-42, Room E32-105, OST-R, BTS, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590-0001, Telephone Number (202) 366-1547, Fax Number (202) 366-3383 or EMAIL Marianne.Seguin@dot.gov .

**COMMENTS:** Send comments to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, 725-17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Washington, DC 20503, Attention: OST Desk Officer.

**SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:**

*OMB Approval No.* 2138-0009

*Title:* Report of Financial and Operating Statistics for Small Aircraft Operators

*Form No.:* BTS Form 298-C.

*Type Of Review:* Extension of a currently approved collection for the financial data.

*Respondents:* Small certificated (29) and commuter air carriers (35)

**Schedule F1:**

*Number of Respondents: 64*

*Number of Annual responses: 256*

*Total Burden Per Response: 4 hours*

*Total Annual Burden: 1,024 hours*

**Schedule F2:**

*Number of Respondents: 29*

*Number of Annual responses: 116*

*Total Burden Per Response: 12 hours.*

*Total Annual Burden: 1,392 hours*

*Needs and Uses:* Program uses for Form 298-C financial data are as follows:

**Mail Rates**

The Department of Transportation sets and updates the Intra-Alaska Bush mail rates based on carrier aircraft operating expense, traffic, and operational data. Form 298-C cost data, especially fuel costs, terminal expenses, and line haul expenses are used in arriving at rate levels. DOT revises the established rates based on the percentage of unit cost changes in the carriers' operations. These updating procedures have resulted in the carriers receiving rates of compensation that more closely parallel their costs of providing mail service and contribute to

the carriers' economic well-being.

### **Essential Air Service**

DOT often has to select a carrier to provide a community's essential air service. The selection criteria include historic presence in the community, reliability of service, financial stability and cost structure of the air carrier.

### **Carrier Fitness**

Fitness determinations are made for both new entrants and established U.S. domestic carriers proposing a substantial change in operations. A portion of these applications consists of an operating plan for the first year (14 CFR Part 204) and an associated projection of revenues and expenses. The carrier's operating costs, included in these projections, are compared against the cost data in Form 298-C for a carrier or carriers with the same aircraft type and similar operating characteristics. Such a review validates the reasonableness of the carrier's operating plan.

The quarterly financial submissions by commuter and small certificated air carriers are used in determining each carrier's continuing fitness to operate. Section 41738 of Title 49 of the United States Code requires DOT to find all commuter and small certificated air carriers fit, willing, and able to conduct passenger service as a prerequisite to providing such service to an eligible essential air service point. In making a fitness determination, DOT reviews three areas of a carrier's operation: (1) the qualifications of its management team, (2) its disposition to comply with laws and regulations, and (3) its financial posture. DOT must determine whether or

not a carrier has sufficient financial resources to conduct its operations without imposing undue risk on the traveling public. Moreover, once a carrier begins conducting flight operations, DOT is required to monitor its continuing fitness.

Senior DOT officials must be kept fully informed and advised of all current and developing economic issues affecting the airline industry. In preparing financial condition reports or status reports on a particular airline, financial and traffic data are analyzed. Briefing papers prepared for senior DOT officials may use the same information.

The Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (44 USC 3501 note), requires a statistical agency to clearly identify information it collects for non-statistical purposes. BTS hereby notifies the respondents and the public that BTS uses the information it collects under this OMB approval for non-statistical purposes including, but not limited to, publication of both Respondent's identity and its data, submission of the information to agencies outside BTS for review, analysis and possible use in regulatory and other administrative matters.

Issued in Washington, DC, on March 27, 2018.

William Chadwick, Jr.,  
Director, Office of Airline Information,  
Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

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