



## **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:** Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics invites the general public, industry and other governmental parties to comment on the continuing need for and usefulness of BTS collecting financial, traffic and operating statistics from small certificated and commuter air carriers. Small, certificated air carriers (operate aircraft with 60 seats or less or with 18,000 pounds of payload capacity or less) currently must file the two quarterly schedules: F-1 “Report of Financial Data”; F-2 “Report of Aircraft Operating Expenses and Related Statistics”; and Commuter air carriers must file the Schedule F-1 “Report of Financial Data”. Commenters should address whether BTS accurately estimated the reporting burden and if there are other ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected.

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

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments identified by DOT Docket ID Number DOT-OST-2014-0031 by any of the following methods:

*Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

*Mail:* Docket Services: U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

*Hand Delivery or Courier:* West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

*Fax:* 202-366-3383.

*Instructions:* Identify docket number, DOT-OST-2014-0031, at the beginning of your comments, and send two copies. To receive confirmation that DOT received your comments, include a self-addressed stamped postcard. Internet users may access all comments received by DOT at <https://www.regulations.gov>. All comments are posted electronically without charge or edits, including any personal information provided.

*Comments:* Comments should identify the associated OMB approval # 2138-0009 and Docket ID Number DOT-OST-2014-0031. Persons wishing the Department to acknowledge receipt of their comments must submit with those comments a self-addressed stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: Comments on OMB # 2138-0009, Docket – DOT-OST-2014-0031. The postcard will be date/time stamped and returned.

*Privacy Act:* Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the Federal Register published on April 11, 2000 (65 FR 19477-78).

*Docket:* For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received, go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. or the street address listed above. Follow the online instructions for accessing the dockets.

*Electronic Access:* You may access comments received for this notice at <https://www.regulations.gov>, by searching docket DOT-OST-2014-0031.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Cecelia Robinson, Office of Airline Information, RTS-42, Room E34-110, OST-R, BTS,1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington,

DC 20590-0001, Telephone Number (202) 893-0515, Fax Number (202) 366-3383 or email [cecelia.robinson@dot.gov](mailto:cecelia.robinson@dot.gov).

Jennifer Rodes, Office of Airline Information, RTS-42, Room E32-103, OST-R, BTS, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington DC 20590-0001, Telephone Number (202) 366-8513, Fax Number (202) 366-3383 or email [Jennifer.rodes@dot.gov](mailto:Jennifer.rodes@dot.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

A notice of this information collection was published in the Federal Register allowing for a 60-day comment period November 8, 2024 at 89 FR 88863.

*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 (28) and commuter air carriers (33)

**Schedule F1:**

*Number of Respondents:* 61

*Number of Annual responses:* 244

*Total Burden Per Response:* 4 hours

*Total Annual Burden:* 976 hours

**Schedule F2:**

*Number of Respondents:* 28

*Number of Annual responses:* 112

*Total Burden Per Response:* 12 hours.

*Total Annual Burden:* 1,344 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 carrier's 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 (U.S.C.) 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 U.S.C. 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, January 8, 2025.

**Rolf Schmitt,**

*Acting Director, Office of Airline Information,*

*Bureau of Transportation Statistics.*

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