

Final

Mr. Paul Hudson
Executive Director
Aviation Consumer Action Project
529 14th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20045

Dear Mr. Hudson:

Opens with a theme sentence, outlining the rest of this long letter.

I appreciate you raising your concerns about several different health and sanitation issues related to air travel. This letter addresses the three major issues you raised-- water purity, general sanitation, and air quality.

Water Purity

Headings help reader identify his three major issues. The letter covers the issues in the same order as they are listed in the theme sentence.

Enforcement of drinking water standards on board aircraft is shared between the EPA and the HHS Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FAA is aware of an FDA working group that is looking at drinking water issues in all forms of transportation, not just aviation. We will monitor the working group's efforts and provide help as necessary. You can find more information on the EPA's website, <http://epa.gov/safewater/wsg/subject.html#interstate> and the FDA website, http://www.fda.gov/ora/inspect_ref/fmd/fmd122.htm. Because of this comprehensive and long-standing regulatory scheme and the history of oversight by two other Federal agencies, we do not believe it appropriate to task the issue of drinking water to our regulatory committee.

General Sanitation

The FDA has regulatory authority over the cleanliness of conveyances, including aircraft. Therefore, this issue is outside FAA's jurisdiction and not an appropriate task for our regulatory committee. The relevant FDA regulations are at 21 CFR part 1250.

Air Quality

The FAA is interested in cabin air standards. We are reviewing the National Research Council Report on The Airliner Cabin Environment and the Health of Passengers and Crew (published December 2001). The report responds to the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Report Act for the 21st Century (Public Law 106-181). Following our internal deliberations, we will decide whether to task ARAC with this issue.

I hope this addresses your concerns. Thank you for your interest in these important aviation issues.

Sincerely,

Marion Blakey
Administrator