

March 29, 2009

VIA US MAIL and FAX: 817-321-7744

Anthony D. Roetzel, Manager, Operations Support Group
Air Traffic Organization, Central Service Area
Federal Aviation Administration
2601 Meacham Blvd
Fort Worth, TX 76137

RE: Proposed expansion of Chicago area Class B Airspace

Mr. Roetzel,

The Soaring Society of America, Inc. (SSA) represents over 11,000 members and was founded in 1932 to foster and promote all phases of gliding and soaring. The organization is a recognized spokesman nationally and internationally in matters affecting the certification of glider aircraft and glider pilots. The SSA also conducts safety and flight training programs, encourages technological research, sets rules and standards for competition, and develops safe operating procedures for flying gliders and conducting gliderport operations – activities pursued in support of and in order to advance the art, sport and science of soaring. The SSA also represents the interests of glider pilots to Federal agencies in discussing various regulatory issues.

I write to you today to express our organization's concerns about one aspect of the proposed expansion of the Chicago area Class B Airspace. The aspect of the proposed expansion in question is the proposed "shelf" (part of the proposed "Area F") that extends out to the due west of the Class B area from the ORD 25 NM radius to the 30 NM radius line. This shelf, with a floor of 4,000 feet MSL, will severely impact the safety of glider operations of the Sky Soaring glider club, whose airfield is located immediately north of the proposed shelf.

Currently, typical glider operations at Sky Soaring involve towing the glider south of the airfield, where there are good alternative airfields and other locations to land away from the home airfield. However, with the imposition of a 4,000 foot MSL (3,000 AGL) ceiling in this area, gliders will have insufficient altitude to operate safely under the shelf. As a result, the practical effect of this proposed shelf will be to bar glider operations beneath the shelf area, thereby confining glider operations at Sky Soaring to the quadrant to the northwest of the club's current location.

The SSA would prefer that the shelf in Area F not be imposed and that the Class B expansion end at the 25 NM radius line. However, if it is deemed essential to expand this slice of the Class B all the way out to the 30 NM radius, we respectfully suggest that the floor of the

Class B in this area be raised to 6,000 feet MSL. In normal air, club class gliders typically have a gliding ration of 30:1 (30 feet of forward motion for every foot of altitude loss.) The additional 2,000 feet would, therefore, give gliders operation under the shelf up to 60,000 additional feet (10 NM) of gliding range and would make limited safe operations in Area F possible.

If the FAA would like further information, we suggest you contact John H. DeRosa, the President of the ChicagoLand Glider Council (an umbrella group that coordinates gliding activity in the Chicago area.) He can be reached using the contact information below.

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Sincerely,

Phillip C. Umphres, Chairman
The Soaring Society of America, Inc.