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REDAC

FAA APPOINTS CO-FOUNDER OF COMMUNITY ALLIANCE TO REDAC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FAA has appointed community activist Dr. Cindy Christiansen, Ph.D, cofounder and chief technology officer of the Aviation-Impacted Communities Alliance (AICA) to its Research, Engineering and Development Advisory Committee (REDAC) for a two-year term, which began on Jan. 17.

AICA was launched in 2020 and now includes approximately 100 grassroots organizations concerned about the impact of aircraft noise and emissions on their communities.

Dr. Christiansen's appointment to REDAC was made by now-former FAA Administrator Michael Whitaker three days before he resigned from the agency on Jan. 20, when President Trump was inaugurated.

In his letter appointing Dr. Christiansen to REDAC, Whitaker wrote:

"Your work representing the views of environment and energy, health policy research, cross-disciplinary research, and aviation public policy concerns will greatly benefit the REDAC and the Department [of Transportation's] efforts to conduct efficient research to ensure safety in air transportation, maintain awareness of emerging technologies supporting aviation and avionics, and provide positive guidance throughout domestic and global aviation communities. Your experience and leadership will add valuable insights and perspectives that will help further the REDAC's mission."

REDAC was established in 1989 to provide advice and recommendations to the FAA Administrator on the needs, objectives, plans, approaches, content, and accomplishments of the agency's aviation research portfolio. The Advisory Committee also assists in ensuring that FAA's present and future aviation research activities are coordinated with similar research being conducted outside the agency.

'Groundbreaking Milestone for Community Representation'

Dr. Christiansen's appointment to REDAC "is not only a groundbreaking milestone for community representation but also a recognition of her extensive expertise and contributions in advocating for the health and well-being of aviation-

impacted communities,” said Darlene Yaplee, the other co-founder of the AICA community alliance.

She noted that her colleague holds an M.S. and Ph.D in Statistics and a B.A. in Mathematics.

“Since 2013, Dr. Christiansen has been deeply engaged in addressing aviation issues, motivated by firsthand experience with the effects of NextGen and Performance-Based Navigation on communities and the environment,” said Yaplee.

She noted that Dr. Christiansen has served on numerous advisory committees throughout her career providing informed guidance to decision-makers. Her notable contributions include service with Massport and Logan Community Advisory Committees.

Dr. Christiansen also co-authored AICA’s Technical Response for the Congressional Quiet Skies Caucus Staff regarding the “FAA’s Report to Congress on the DNL Metric and DNL 65 Standard for Airplane Noise.” She co-authored the NOISE-CON paper “Realizing 21st Century Noise Policy,” and presented at the U.C. Davis Aviation Noise and Emissions Symposium on the topic, “Is it Time to Retire a 30-Year Old Aviation Single Noise Metric?” among other significant works.

This appointment, Yaplee said, “underscores the importance of collaboration between aviation stakeholders and impacted communities. Dr. Christiansen’s expertise will undoubtedly strengthen REDAC’s mission and amplify the voice of communities in aviation policy and research.”

FACA Compliance Questioned

Yaplee believes that comments she made at an Oct. 16, 2024, REDAC meeting questioning whether the Committee was in compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) may have helped get Dr. Christiansen appointed to the committee.

“FACA mandates that committee memberships be ‘fairly balanced in terms of the points of view represented and the functions to be performed’. However, I have not seen representation from directly affected community stakeholders on REDAC and strongly encourage the inclusion of such voices to balance the current stakeholder makeup, particularly on the Environment and Energy Subcommittee,” Yaplee told REDAC.

She told ANR, “We remain hopeful that the FAA will fully comply with FACA [in selecting the membership of its new] Aviation Noise Advisory Committee (ANAC) and prioritize fair and balanced representation. Failure to do so risks excluding key voices and undermining trust in aviation noise policy development.”