



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

AUG 19 1996

Office of the Chairman

Honorable D. K. Sharma
Administrator
Research and Special Programs Administration
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Dr. Sharma:

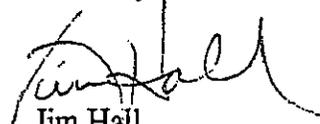
The National Transportation Safety Board has reviewed your July 16, 1996, letter responding to Safety Recommendations A-96-29 and -30. These recommendations were issued on May 31, 1996, as a result of the Safety Board's investigation of the accident involving ValuJet flight 592 in the Everglades near Miami, Florida, on May 11, 1996.

Safety Recommendation A-96-29 asked that the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), in cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), permanently prohibit the transportation of chemical oxygen generators as cargo on board any passenger or cargo aircraft when the generators have passed their expiration dates and the chemical core has not been depleted. The Safety Board is aware of RSPA's interim final rule, issued May 24, 1996, that temporarily prohibits oxygen generators as cargo on passenger aircraft until January 1, 1997, and notes that RSPA and the FAA will consider making the ban permanent; however, this prohibition does not apply to cargo aircraft.

The Safety Board understands that RSPA and the FAA will consider permanently prohibiting the shipment of chemical oxygen generators on board passenger and cargo aircraft in rulemaking projects. Because a chemical oxygen generator is not designed to be reused after its shelf life has expired, we again emphasize that there is no need to transport undepleted generators that have their passed their expiration dates on board any aircraft, and we believe RSPA and the FAA should act immediately to prohibit their shipment on cargo aircraft. Pending completion of rulemaking to permanently prohibit the transportation of such generators on board any passenger or cargo aircraft, Safety Recommendation A-96-29 is classified "Open--Acceptable Response."

Safety Recommendation A-96-30 asked that RSPA, in cooperation with the FAA, prohibit the transportation of oxidizers and oxidizing materials (e.g., nitric acid) in cargo compartments that do not have fire or smoke detection systems. The Safety Board notes that RSPA, with advice from the FAA, has initiated a rulemaking project to prohibit the transportation of oxidizers in Class D cargo compartments on both passenger and cargo aircraft. This project addresses the intent of the recommendation and pending completion of the final rule, Safety Recommendation A-96-30 is classified "Open--Acceptable Response."

Sincerely,



Jim Hall
Chairman

cc: Dr. Donald R. Trilling, Director
Office of Environment, Energy and Safety

