NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL, D. R. 61-15

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As published in the Federal Register on
September 29, 1962 (27 F.R. 9657)

FEDERAL AVIATION AGENCY

[14 CFR Part 60]

[Reg. Docket No. 787]

AIR TRAFFIC

Withdrawal of Proposed Establishment of Standard Altimeter Setting (29.92" Hg.) Above 14,500 Feet Mean Sea Level (MSL)

By Draft Release No. 61-15, published in the FEDERAL REGISTER (26 F.R. 6001) as a notice of proposed rule making on July 4, 1961, the Federal Aviation Agency proposed an amendment to Part 60 to require the use of the standard altimeter setting (29.92" Hg.) above 14,500 feet m.s.l. The reasons therefor were outlined in detail in Draft Release No. 61-15.

The written comments received in response to Draft Release No. 61-15 indicated that those who opposed the proposed amendment were about equal in number to those who endorsed the proposal. The adverse comments contended that (1) there would be a loss of highly desirable altitudes when a decrease in atmospheric pressure occurs; (2) an increased pilot/controller workload would result, thereby decreasing safety; (3) hazards would result to flights operating in mountainous areas; and (4) the planning of a safe and economical operation would be greatly hampered by the altitude restrictions resulting from application of the pressure and terrain tables.

The proposed amendment was offered on the premise that (1) there is a definite need for increased accuracy in the art of altimetry; (2) approximately one-third of the time during winter months, pressure differences may result in an altitude error of 300 feet or more between stations separated just short of 200 nautical miles; (3) reducing the necessity for frequent altimeter setting would minimize the errors resulting from poor enunciation, difficult radio communications, misreading or missetting the instrument; (4) there would be a resultant decrease in pilot-controller workload; (5) the correction tables would adequately provide for operations in mountainous areas; (6) experience with the standard altimeter setting as currently required had been favorable; and (7) the proposed rule would provide an orderly and gradual method of acquainting the user with the benefits to be derived from the use of standard settings, while, at the same time, establishing an environment compatible with future programs for an automatic altitude reporting system.

However, it is true that more extensive use of standard settings would not, in itself, eliminate all of the known errors associated with the art of altimetry, nor will it permit a reduction in vertical separation standards at the present time. Additionally, the Agency has under review a proposal to convert the three-layer airway structure to a two-layer structure. The "dividing" altitude between structures would probably be set at some altitude in excess of 14,500 feet m.s.l. and the planned continuity between the base of the standard altimeter setting and the "dividing" altitude between airway structures would be lost. Another consideration is the fact that a planned system of automatic altitude reporting, based upon standard settings, will not be implemented until sometime in the future.

In view of the foregoing developments, the proposed amendment does not appear to be timely and is being withdrawn. While a more extensive system for maintaining cruising altitude by use of a standard altimeter setting may be adopted, any such proposal would be the subject of a future notice of proposed rule making. The comments received in response to Draft Release No. 61-15 have been carefully considered before making this determination and will again be evaluated in the drafting of a future proposal.

In consideration of the foregoing, Draft Release No. 61-15, published in the FEDERAL REGISTER (26 F.R. 6001) as a notice of proposed rule making on July 4, 1961, is hereby withdrawn.

This withdrawal shall become effective on publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(Sec. 307; 72 Stat. 749, 49 U.S.C. 1348)

Issued in Washington, D.C., on September 17, 1962.

D. D. THOMAS,
Director, Air Traffic Service.