

APPENDIX D.—LETTERS FROM THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY
BOARD TO THE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Hon. WILLIAM F. McKEE,
*Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration,
Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C.*

MARCH 26, 1968.

DEAR GENERAL McKEE: In our investigation and analysis of general aviation accidents, we consider all relevant aspects of meteorological facilities, services, and procedures. Our analysis of aircraft accident data covering general aviation during the year 1966 has recently been published. Among other things, this analytical summary reveals that weather was shown as a direct cause in only 2.4 percent of all such accidents and 6 percent of these were fatal. However, it also shows that weather was cited as a related factor more frequently than any other (751 accidents or 13.1 percent of the total and, of these, 22 percent were fatal). Similar figures could be quoted for previous years. In the light of such statistics, it is incumbent upon all concerned to seek ways and means of improving the record.

Based upon all the information at our disposal, it is our conviction that improved meteorological facilities, services, and procedures could have reduced substantially the degree of hazard involved in these general aviation operations. Our recommendations relative to such improvements are attached hereto. Some of these recommendations have been stated by the Board previously. Many of the others are not original with the Board; some were highlighted by the Environmental Science Services Administration (ESSA)/Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)/industry survey conducted last year. Nevertheless, we feel it imperative that an effort be made to identify areas of the aviation weather service that are in need of improvement so that the responsible agencies may undertake effective corrective action.

The Board is aware that implementation of this entire program would involve very substantial increases in funds available for such purpose. We are also aware that there are overall budget considerations which would make the rapid implementation of such a program unrealistic in terms of early complete accomplishment.

However, as a long-range program we believe our recommendations are worthy of adoption. We also believe some of the improvements suggested are susceptible of accomplishment without basic change in existing programs, but rather by more affirmative attention to them. Recommendations Nos. 6, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, and 25 are examples of the sort of thing we have in mind as subject to improvement along the lines just mentioned.

In view of the memorandum of agreement between the FAA and ESSA dated August 2, 1965, and in the interest of facilitating coordination between your two agencies, a similar letter transmitting our recommendations is being forwarded to the Administrator of ESSA.

Sincerely yours,

JOSEPH J. O'CONNELL, Jr., *Chairman.*

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS
IN THE AVIATION WEATHER SERVICE

1. Increase the number of aviation weather observing sites. There are many gaps in the network both in the contiguous United States and in Alaska. Even taking into account the Supplementary Aeronautical Reporting Stations (SAWRS), there is still only about one observing station for each nine airports and only a portion of them are open on a 24-hour-per-day basis.
2. A vigorous program of quality control of aviation weather observations should be developed. A basic requirement of the aviation community is detailed, accurate reports.