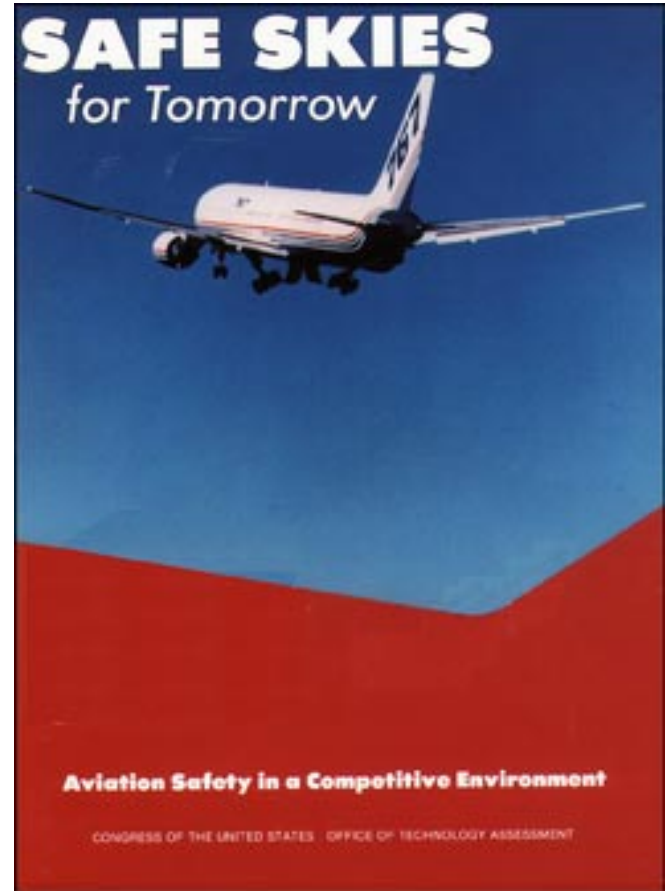


*Safe Skies for Tomorrow: Aviation Safety in
a Competitive Environment*

July 1988

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Foreword

It has been 10 years since the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978 transformed the rules of the game for the commercial aviation industry. Although new entrants plunged into the market throughout the early 1980s, the industry had consolidated markedly by late 1987. While many of the major players remain the same, computerized reservation systems and hub and spoke scheduling have changed substantially the way airlines operate. Unquestionably, more Americans than ever are flying, and the safety record for commercial aviation in the United States remains among the best in the world. Nonetheless, even after many studies on the impacts of deregulation, questions linger about the adequacy of existing Federal safety policies and programs. The Committee on Public Works and Transportation and the Subcommittee on Government Activities and Transportation of the Government Operations Committee, both of the House of Representatives, asked the Office of Technology Assessment to determine how well existing safety policies, regulations, and technologies meet the government's responsibility for ensuring safety in commercial aviation. The study was endorsed by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

This report contains the results of that analysis, and a review of critical management issues for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has been added to the basic questions about the adequacy of Federal standards and programs. During the course of the study, it became clear that a full report for Congress would have to consider how policy is determined and implemented, and thus the operation of FAA and the role of the Department of Transportation. This comprehensive look at aviation safety also includes the economic framework of the industry as it affects operations, an analysis of safety data, and a review of research and development for safety technologies for both industry and government.

Throughout the study, the advisory panel, review group, workshop participants, and a host of contributors (see app. B) played key roles in developing the major issues and contributed a broad and invaluable range of perspectives. OTA thanks them for their substantial commitment of time and energy. Their participation does not necessarily represent endorsement of the contents of the report, for which OTA bears sole responsibility.



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NOTE: OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The panel does not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes full responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.

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Aviation Safety in a Competitive Environment
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