

FLORIDA TAX OFFICIALS: OK TO FLY NEW PLANES INTO SUNSHINE STATE

AOPA AVIATION eBRIEF July 1, 2009

Florida officials have clarified a tax policy that was hurting tourism and business aviation in the Sunshine State. New aircraft purchasers were avoiding flying to Florida because of an ambiguity in the state's use-tax laws, which allowed the state Department of Revenue to charge taxes on airplanes flown into the state within six months of purchase. At the urging of AOPA and EAA, revenue officials issued a statement saying that "a brief, recreational use of property in Florida will not, by itself, subject an aircraft owner to use tax." AOPA is now working to formalize that opinion in a bill that has already passed the state House but has stalled in the Senate.



LAW ENFORCEMENT STILL CAN'T HAVE DRONES

The FAA is "holding firm" to its policy against the routine use of unmanned aerial vehicles by State and local police departments. Some of the law enforcement agencies have indicated that they want to incorporate them into various aspects of police work such as surveillance and even traffic control. FAA spokesman Les Dorr said, "There is nothing to our knowledge and no UAS technology at this time that would allow unmanned aircraft to meet the same 'see and avoid' [regulatory technical] standard that manned aircraft have to operate under." Drones are being tried to a limited extent by Homeland Security on the nation's borders. Of course they are being used for actual warfare in Afghanistan and Pakistan.



HOMELAND SECURITY REINS IN TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION



Under a Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill for fiscal year 2010 that was passed by the House the last week of June, lawmakers lauded the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for working with general aviation to develop a modified Large Aircraft Security Program (LASP) rule that "minimizes adverse affects on general aviation while addressing security concerns. H.R.2892 urges the TSA to "weigh all the costs and benefits associated with new security mandates for general aviation operators and airports. The initial notice of proposed rulemaking for LASP would apply commercial air carrier security measures to GA aircraft weighing more than 12,500 pounds, regardless of how they are used. Responding to objections from pilots and legislators, the TSA has said it will publish a new NPRM before issuing a final rule. H.R.2892 also rejected termination of LORAN and provided continued funding for the system.