SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications shall identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained in this notice may be changed in light of the comments received.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 94–NM–184–AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 94-NM-184-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), which is the airworthiness authority for the United Kingdom, recently notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on all British Aerospace Model BAC 1–11 200 and 400 series airplanes. The CAA advises that it has received reports of cracking in panel number 1 at rib 6 of the lower skin of the wing on these airplanes that had accumulated 17,000 to 42,000 total flight cycles. Cracking was also found in the panel number 2 at rib 10 of the lower skin of the wing on these airplanes that had accumulated 45,000 to 53,000 total flight cycles. Furthermore, cracking was found in fixed ribs 6, 10, and 14 of the leading edge of the wing. Investigation revealed that the cause of this cracking has been attributed to fatigue-related stress. Fatigue-related cracking in the

panels of the lower skin of the wing or in the fixed ribs of the leading edge of the wing, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, could reduce the structural integrity of the wing.

British Aerospace has issued Alert Service Bulletin 57–A-PM5992, Issue 1, dated October 14, 1992, which describes procedures for various repetitive inspections to detect cracks in panel number 1 at rib 6 and in panel number 2 at rib 10 of the lower skin of the wing. in the rebate radius of panel number 2 at the joint between panels 1 and 2 of the lower skin of the wing, and in the top and bottom flanges of fixed ribs 6, 10, and 14 of the leading edge of the wing. This alert service bulletin also describes procedures for repair or replacement of cracked parts, which would eliminate the need for certain repetitive inspections. The CAA classified this alert service bulletin as mandatory in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in the United Kingdom.

This airplane model is manufactured in the United Kingdom and is type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the CAA has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the CAA, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other airplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the proposed AD would require various repetitive inspections to detect cracks in panel number 1 at rib 6 and in panel number 2 at rib 10 of the lower skin of the wing, in the rebate radius of panel number 2 at the joint between panels 1 and 2 of lower skin of the wing, and in the top and bottom flanges of fixed ribs 6, 10, and 14 of the leading edge of the wing. This proposed AD would also require repair or replacement of cracked parts, which would constitute terminating action for certain repetitive inspection requirements. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the alert service bulletin described previously. If any cracks are detected at rib 10, the repair of panel number 2 would be required to be accomplished in accordance with a method approved by the FAA.

As a result of recent communications with the Air Transport Association (ATA) of America, the FAA has learned that, in general, some operators may misunderstand the legal effect of AD's on airplanes that are identified in the applicability provision of the AD, but that have been altered or repaired in the area addressed by the AD. The FAA points out that all airplanes identified in the applicability provision of an AD are legally subject to the AD. If an airplane has been altered or repaired in the affected area in such a way as to affect compliance with the AD, the owner or operator is required to obtain FAA approval for an alternative method of compliance with the AD, in accordance with the paragraph of each AD that provides for such approvals. A note has been included in this notice to clarify this long standing requirement.

The FAA estimates that 31 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 14 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$26,040, or \$840 per airplane.

The total cost impact figure discussed above is based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the proposed requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted.

The regulations proposed herein would not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this proposal would not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed regulation (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) if promulgated, will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the