

Safety Justification for STA Request
June 14, 2010
(Application Originally Submitted on May 4, 2010)

The Red Bull Air Race World Championship is a major international event. The race series occurs over a several month period at a number of different venues around the world. The upcoming event will take place in the New York, NY area off the southern tip of Manhattan over New York harbor and the Hudson River near Ellis Island with planes taking off and land from the Linden, NJ airport. The actual event will be held on June 19 and 20, 2010 with pre-event activities beginning several days before the event.

This is a very large and potentially hazardous event for the pilots and the many thousands of attendees. Public Safety concerns are paramount at events of this magnitude, where coordination and communications have been issues in the past and the consequences have been tragic. Good communications, both audio and video, is key to minimizing the risks to the public and the pilots. Wireless video cameras will continually monitor the speeding planes as they navigate the race course. The timing and risk is comparable to the Blue Angels, with the added uncertainty of a true air race. In an air race the plans traverse a fairly short course at high speeds (at times in excess of 400 MPH) at low altitudes while executing a number of very sharp turns and passing between pylons placed at intervals along the course.

This particular event will take place in an extremely hazardous area due to the large nearby population centers, tall buildings in the area adjacent to the race course as well as the large crowd of spectators both on land and on the water below the race course. Any lack or loss of communications poses a direct and major risk to public safety, as well as homeland security, in the event of a simultaneous terrorist threat.

Air racing is a particularly dangerous sport not just for the pilots involved but for those on the ground as well. Crashes are not uncommon and over the years a significant number have led to fatalities. For example in 2007 at an air race in Reno, NV three pilots were killed in four days. In fact that one particular event, that has taken place

annually since about 1963, has averaged close to one fatality every other year. In addition to the fatal crashes at air races there have been an even larger number of crashes where there are injuries and property damage such as a crash at the Red Bull Race in Perth Australia in April of this year that destroyed an aircraft and injured the Brazilian pilot.

The New York event will have to proceed even if the requested STA is not received. In that there are only a limited number of already licensed frequencies that will be available the safety of the both life and property will definitely be compromised.