



**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**Washington, DC 20515**

**Don Young**  
**Chairman**

**James L. Oberstar**  
**Ranking Democratic Member**

July 21, 2006

Lloyd A. Jones, Chief of Staff  
Elizabeth Megginson, Chief Counsel

David Heymsfeld, Democratic Chief of Staff

The Honorable Todd Zinser  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Washington D.C. 20590

Dear Acting Inspector General Zinser:

On June 21, 2006, The House Aviation Subcommittee held a hearing to examine the progress of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Joint Planning and Development Office (JPDO) effort to develop the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NGATS). It is clear that much work remains to establish costs, milestones, and expected benefits from JPDO initiatives. Moreover, while the 2025 target date for the JPDO has merit from a planning perspective, actions are needed much sooner to meet the expected increased demand for air travel.

Notwithstanding the financial condition of the legacy airlines and rising fuel prices, FAA expects the demand for air travel to remain strong. In fact, approximately 740 million passengers traveled last year and FAA predicts that the U.S. commercial aviation is on track to carry over 1 billion passengers by 2015. This means that solutions are needed much earlier than 2025 to address the nation's capacity needs and to prevent aviation gridlock.

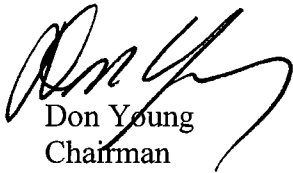
We would like a clear understanding of current FAA efforts that will provide for the most capacity benefits in the near-term. Therefore, we are requesting that your office provide us with your observations on the initiatives—both technological and procedural—that will provide the most capacity benefits in the next 5 years.

This review should include an update on FAA's airspace redesign efforts, which your office reported on last year, as well as a review of the FAA's implementation of performance-based navigation initiatives i.e., Area Navigation (RNAV) and Required Navigation Performance (RNP) in both the en route and terminal domains. In particular, we would like you to examine program implementation processes, the FAA's ability to set and meet program schedule milestones, and any reasons for delays in meeting those milestones. It would also be helpful to understand how these programs are interrelated, and how delays in one program might affect another (e.g., how delays in airspace redesign affect the implementation of performance-based navigation initiatives).

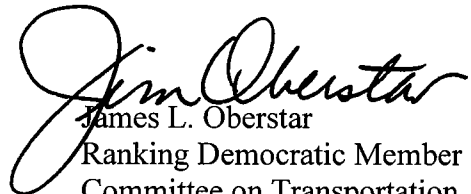
If, in the course of your work, you identify other relevant issues that you believe the Congress should be aware of, we would like you to include them in your analysis.

Should you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact Giles Giovinazzi, Democratic staff on the House Aviation Subcommittee at (202) 225-9161, or Chris Brown, Republican staff on the House Aviation Subcommittee at (202) 226-3220.

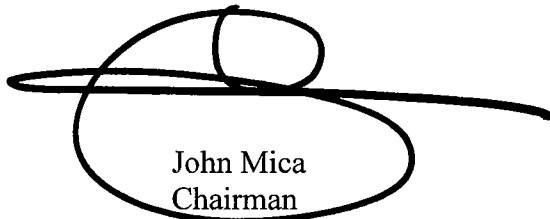
Sincerely,



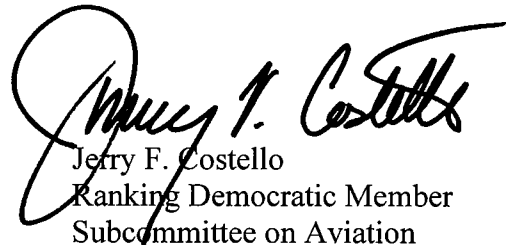
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John Mica  
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Subcommittee on Aviation



Jerry F. Costello  
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