

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 12, 2015

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio:

As the Committee considers reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), we urge you to continue to support the implementation of the Airline Safety and Federal Aviation Administration Extension Act of 2010 (PL.111-216) and resist pressure to undermine the enacted provisions.

The tragic crash of Colgan Air Flight 3407 six years ago in Clarence Center, N.Y. spurred Congress to pass the largest overhaul to aviation safety in over forty years. This law encompassed the priorities that had been identified for years by the National Transportation Safety Board but had long been ignored. From pilot fatigue guidelines to new training methods for pilots, this law has helped achieve *One Level of Safety* among all airlines and gone a long way in preventing future accidents like that of Flight 3407.

Since passage of this legislation, the FAA has successfully implemented many of its provisions – with the most recent being a final rule requiring safety management systems for all Part 121 carriers. While these rules have been marked by the slow pace of rulemaking, they have been successful in encompassing the views of all stakeholders. One of the final remaining measures on the docket for implementation of this 2010 law is the creation of a Pilot Records Database. This database – which could have revealed Flight 3407 captain’s history of failed test flights – is critical in ensuring that airlines have full access to a pilot’s comprehensive record, including licenses, aircraft ratings, check rides, Notices of Disapproval and other proficiency tests for hiring purposes.

As the FAA continues to fulfill the mission set forth by Congress in 2010, we ask that the Committee – during consideration of an upcoming FAA Reauthorization – remain committed to upholding the spirit and letter of this aviation safety law.

Of particular concern are attempts to erode the pilot qualification standards – which mandate that a first officer hold an Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) certificate, typically attained through 1,500 hours of flight time. Claims that changes to this rule are necessary to ameliorate a supposed pilot shortage ignore the meager salaries that first officers earn at regional airlines – the true reason these airlines have difficulty attracting qualified applicants. In addition, we ask that the timeline for the Pilots Records Database be accelerated and subject to clear implementation milestones.

We thank you for your continued cooperation and efforts to ensure safe travel aboard commercial airlines – and we look forward to working with you as the Committee considers the latest FAA Reauthorization.

Sincerely,



Chris Collins
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Peter T. King
Member of Congress



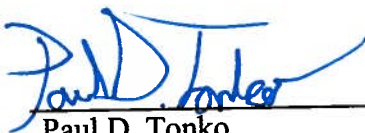
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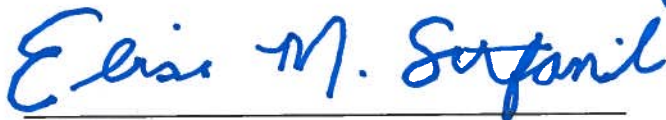

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