

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 3, 2020

Steve Dickson
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20591

Robert Sumwalt
Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, D.C. 20594

Dear Administrator Dickson and Chairman Sumwalt:

We write to strongly urge the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to send investigators to the site of the tragic plane crash that occurred in Genesee County, New York on October 2nd, 2020, resulting in two fatalities, Mr. Stephen Barnes and his niece, Ms. Elizabeth Barnes.

In an article entitled “NTSB not traveling to Barnes plane crash site in part due to Covid-19,” the Buffalo News states NTSB investigators will not travel to the scene of the plane crash to ascertain the potential causes.¹ This news is extremely concerning. The NTSB is an independent agency “...charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States” to determine probable cause and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents.² While appropriate precautions to prevent COVID-19 spread and infection are of the utmost importance, the agency must develop and execute an appropriate plan to adequately and safely examine the crash site as soon as possible. Neglecting to do so leaves crucial information about what caused this tragic crash unknown.

No community knows the importance of an NTSB investigation more than Western New York. These investigations prevent future losses of life, result in safer skies, and bring closure to those who have lost loved ones. We strongly urge the NTSB to proceed expeditiously with a full investigation including the deployment of on-site investigators.

Sincerely,



BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress



CHRIS JACOBS
Member of Congress

¹ Besecker, Aaron. “NTSB not traveling to Barnes plane crash site in part due to Covid-19” The Buffalo News, October 3, 2020. https://buffalonews.com/news/local/ntsb-not-traveling-to-barnes-plane-crash-scene-in-part-due-to-covid-19/article_820cd63a-0582-11eb-803f-4334c55dece5.html

² National Transportation Safety Board. “About the National Transportation Safety Board” October 3, 2020. <https://www.nts.gov/about/Pages/default.aspx>