

Representative John Hall, Opening Statement
Subcommittee on Aviation
Runway Safety Hearing
February 13, 2008

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I'd like to welcome our guests here today and thank them for coming to testify on the vitally important issue of Runway Safety. Only a few months ago the increased number of near misses on America's runways led GAO to warn of the "high risk of a catastrophic runway collision occurring in the United States." As the single most deadly accident in the history of aviation happened as a result of a runway incursion, this is a threat none of us may take lightly.

I look forward to hearing the testimony you will offer today, however I cannot help but think the best solution is the most obvious. We need our airport towers to be fully staffed with highly qualified controllers. Those controllers need to be fully rested and have an adequate number of breaks and downtime so they can provide the flying public with the best service possible. Only the best controllers can provide sufficient levels of experience and know-how. Every day we go without controllers at their peak form is a continued danger and a disservice to the American people.