



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

Bill Shuster
Chairman

Washington, DC 20515

Peter A. DeFazio
Ranking Member

February 8, 2018

Mathew M. Sturges, Staff Director

Katherine W. Dedrick, Democratic Staff Director

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Admiral Paul F. Zukunft
Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20593-7000

Dear Secretary Chao, Secretary Azar, and Admiral Zukunft:

In August 2017, Democratic staff of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure (Committee Democratic staff) began a review of the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) drug and alcohol testing program to evaluate patterns of increased usage in each mode of transportation, including the United States Coast Guard (USCG) which falls under DOT's testing program, and to determine whether DOT's program is effective or in need of improvement.

The impetus for the review was several major transportation accidents involving the use of licit or illicit drugs and a series of news articles highlighting the significant increase in drug use, in particular, opioids, in the United States and in the transportation sector. These accidents included a 2000 accident at Baltimore-Washington International Airport Light Rail Station, which injured 18 people; a 2007 containership allision with the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, which released 53,500 gallons of fuel oil into the San Francisco Bay; a 2014 tractor-trailer accident in Davis, Oklahoma, which killed four people and seriously injured 12 others; a 2015 tractor-trailer accident in Chattanooga, Tennessee, which killed six occupants and injured four others; a 2016 hot air balloon accident near Lockhart, Texas, which killed 16 people; and a 2016 Amtrak accident in Chester, Pennsylvania, which killed two Amtrak workers.

In conducting the audit, Committee Democratic staff interviewed staff of the DOT's Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy, each of the Department's modal administrations, and the United States Coast Guard, which is under the Committee's jurisdiction. They also interviewed staff of the National Transportation Safety Board, the Amtrak Inspector General, the DOT's Inspector General,

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Page 2

and the Government Accountability Office, and a sampling of regulated entities, associations that represent such regulated entities, labor representatives whose workers are tested for drug and alcohol use, and transportation safety groups. Thank you for making your staff available for these interviews and for providing my staff with the necessary information to conduct the review.

Overall, Committee Democratic staff found that DOT is effectively carrying out drug and alcohol testing requirements, policies, and goals, but there are significant gaps in the DOT's drug and alcohol testing program that should be addressed. These gaps are outlined in the attached report and include 10 findings and 15 recommendations, which I believe, if implemented, will provide the Federal Government and the traveling public better information regarding the risk to our transportation system from drug and alcohol abuse and improve the safety of our navigable waters, pipelines, railways, roads, and skies.

Thank you again for your staff's assistance with this review and for your consideration of the report, findings, and recommendations. Please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Jennifer Homendy of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Transportation with additional questions or if you need further information at (202) 225-3274.

Sincerely,



PETER DeFAZIO
Ranking Member