



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Sam Graves
Chairman

Rick Larsen
Ranking Member

Jack Ruddy, Staff Director

Katherine W. Dedrick, Democratic Staff Director

January 31, 2024

The Honorable Michael Whitaker
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Whitaker:

We write to you concerning the recent rapid depressurization accident on Alaska Airlines Flight 1282 that occurred on January 5, 2024.¹ As you know, approximately 6 minutes after departing Portland International Airport, the left door plug of Flight 1282 separated from the airframe causing a rapid, uncontrolled depressurization of the aircraft at about 16,000 feet.² Thanks to the quick reactions of the flight crew, the aircraft landed safely at Portland International Airport, without any serious physical injuries to the 171 passengers and six crew members onboard.³

We support the decisions made thus far by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regarding the MAX 9 aircraft, including the announced audit of Boeing's quality control and safety practices and investigation into Boeing's 737 MAX 9 manufacturing.⁴ These actions, including those regarding the return to service, are designed to ensure that the highest manufacturing and quality control standards are maintained throughout our aviation ecosystem.

On February 6, 2024, you are scheduled to testify before the Subcommittee on Aviation of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Given the seriousness of this accident and this Subcommittee's oversight responsibilities regarding civil aviation safety, please be

¹ Colbi Edmonds and Rebecca Carballo, *The Frightful Minutes Aboard Flight 1282*, N.Y. TIMES, (Jan. 7, 2024), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/07/us/alaska-airlines-boeing-passengers.html>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*


⁴ Letter from John Piccola, Office of Aviation Safety, Director for Integrated Certificate Management Division, Federal Aviation Administration to Carole Murray, Vice President, Total Quality, Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Boeing, (Jan. 10, 2024), available at www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/EIR2024NM420001_737MAX9.pdf.

prepared to answer the following questions during the hearing through your opening testimony and subsequent Member questions:

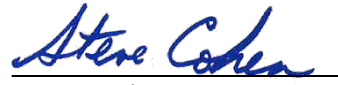
1. Is the FAA considering further action regarding the Safety Management Systems (SMS) requirements for aircraft part suppliers or other entities involved in aircraft manufacturing not captured by current regulations or proposed rulemaking?
2. Prior to the accident, did the FAA find any evidence of persistent quality control lapses in any of Boeing's production lines? Separately, has FAA become aware of any lapses since the start of its investigation?
3. The FAA recently added staff to oversee Boeing's manufacturing processes for its 737 aircraft. Is the FAA considering any changes to its broader on-site surveillance of Boeing's and its suppliers' manufacturing processes to help ensure its products conform to their type design?
4. What changes, if any, is the FAA considering to its current risk model for inspecting production facilities?
5. What aspects of production oversight and quality assurance for Boeing's commercial passenger aircraft are considered 'delegated' to the manufacturer? How does the FAA interact with Boeing representatives who perform these delegated functions?
6. Can you provide an update on implementation of the *Aircraft Certification Safety and Accountability Act* (ACSAA), specifically sections 102, 103, 107, 122, and 125?
7. Is the FAA properly staffed and resourced to ensure effective aircraft production oversight, including in its Integrated Certificate Management Division?
8. Can you describe the communication process between the FAA, Boeing, and the affected airlines since the incident? Were airlines able to receive the information they needed to ensure they could plan ahead and minimize potential operating disruptions for passengers?

Thank you for your attention to these important issues. We will continue to closely monitor the ongoing investigations and look forward to your testimony before us on February 6, 2024. If you have any questions, please contact T. Hunter Presti, Majority Staff Director, Subcommittee on Aviation, [REDACTED], and Brian Bell, Minority Staff Director, Subcommittee on Aviation, [REDACTED].

Sincerely,



Garret Graves
Chairman
Subcommittee on Aviation



Steve Cohen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Aviation



Sam Graves
Chairman
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure



Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation
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