

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 22, 2024

Hon. Michael G. Whitaker
Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20591

Hon. Jennifer Homendy
Chair, National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Administrator Whitaker and Chair Homendy,

We write as concerned representatives, whose districts are home to or near many of the country's most critical aviation hubs, regarding a series of recent aviation incidents that have raised questions about safety and maintenance protocols.

There have been at least eleven reported safety or mechanical incidents involving domestic carriers across the country this month alone, many of which have affected these carriers' operations at San Francisco International Airport (SFO). For example, On March 4th, an incoming flight to SFO landed safely after reporting one engine failure mid-flight. On March 7th, a flight from SFO made an emergency landing due to a suspected hydraulics failure, and a day earlier, another flight lost a wheel during takeoff at SFO, which crashed into an employee parking lot, damaging several vehicles. On March 14th, an SFO-bound flight landed at the airport with a hydraulic leak and a "small amount of smoke."¹ On March 15th, a flight from SFO landed in Oregon with an exterior panel missing below the aircraft's fuselage. There have been incidents involving other airports around the country as well, including on March 4th, when a flight heading to Fort Myers, FL, was forced to make an emergency landing after an engine caught fire, and an incident on March 8th in which a flight rolled off a runway in Houston and into the surrounding grass. These events amount to an extremely troubling pattern that we believe may pose a major safety risk to passengers and bystanders on the ground alike.

We commend your agencies on their quick and decisive action related to the January 5th incident in which a door plug blew off of an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max 9 aircraft bound for Ontario, CA. The immediate grounding of the Max 9 fleet, in addition to the thorough

¹ San Francisco Chronicle, March 14, 2024, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/united-airlines-hydraulic-leak-smoke-19028577.php>.

investigation and audit, has been critical in re-establishing public trust in air travel and keeping our skies safe.

These most recent incidents point to the need for a broader look at airplane maintenance and safety issues. **To that end, we are requesting information on the actions each of your agencies is currently taking or plans to take in response to the latest string of incidents on domestic carriers nationwide**, including any information on whether any of the incidents within the past several months are related, whether any aircraft involved in these incidents were overdue for maintenance at the time of the incident, and whether additional crew training, changes in maintenance schedules, or other operational changes could likely prevent incidents such as these going forward.

Air travel on U.S. carriers remains one of the safest modes of transportation thanks to our country's robust regulatory framework and your agencies' expertise and deep commitment to passenger and crew safety. We look forward to working together to maintain this vitally important system. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for the work you do day in and day out to keep our skies safe.

Sincerely,



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



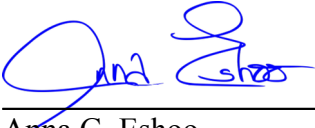
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Mary Sattler Peltola
Member of Congress



Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress