

# United States Senate

Washington, DC 20510-1304

March 12, 2019

Daniel K. Elwell  
Acting Administrator  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Acting Administrator Elwell:

I write to urge the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to immediately provide the public with clear answers about the current safety of Boeing 737 Max 8 series aircraft and to work with both the manufacturer and the airlines to perform a thorough investigation of the aircraft to find and remedy any potential vulnerabilities. If the FAA deems the aircraft safe to fly, the public deserves full transparency about how the FAA came to that conclusion as well as what actions the FAA is taking to ensure the public is protected from accidents like those that recently occurred in Ethiopia and Indonesia.

Several countries around the world have responded to this weekend's tragic airplane crash near Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which involved a Boeing 737 Max 8 series aircraft, by temporarily banning the use of these planes in their airspace. The Ethiopian Airlines crash bears alarming similarities to another recent accident near Jakarta, Indonesia, that also involved a Boeing 737 Max 8 series crashing only a few minutes after takeoff. The two accidents killed all those on board, resulting in the loss of 346 lives. Eight American citizens were among those who tragically lost their lives in this past weekend's Ethiopian Airlines crash, including an Army captain from Illinois.

The similarities of these two recent crashes involving the same aircraft raise legitimate questions about whether an unknown problem exists. While any actions the FAA takes should be supported by evidence, at the very least the flying public deserve clear answers from the FAA about the safety of the aircraft on which they are flying—especially in light of the precautionary measures taken by other nations in response to the two recent crashes.

Although the National Transportation Safety Board and the FAA will be assisting in the investigation of the Ethiopia Airlines crash, the FAA has a broader responsibility to ensure each Boeing 737 Max 8 series aircraft currently operating in the U.S. is safe to fly. To that end, I urge

the FAA to fully investigate any potential technical and mechanical vulnerabilities of the Boeing 737 Max 8 series aircraft, to re-inspect and certify each aircraft in the U.S. fleet as safe to fly, and to implement interim and long-term changes to design, procedures, and training to support the continued operational safety of the fleet.

The safety of pilots, flight attendants, and the flying public must come first. I appreciate your immediate attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator