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JOINT ECONOMIC

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1604

September 28, 2005

Congressional Liaison
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 1022
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Liaison:

Enclosed please find a letter sent to my office from [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] concerning the Mitsubishi MU-2. I believe you will find the letter to be self-explanatory

I would appreciate it if you would review the enclosed letter and provide my office with any information that may be helpful in addressing [REDACTED] concerns. Please direct your response to Jamie Woodworth in my Wichita office at (316) 264-8066 or 245 North Waco Suite 240, Wichita, Kansas 67202.

I am grateful for any assistance you may be able to provide in this matter.

Sincerely,



Sam Brownback
United States Senator

612 SOUTH KANSAS AVENUE
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www.senate.gov/~brownback

September 14, 2005

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Honorable Sam Brownback
245 N. Waco
Suite 240
Wichita, KS 67202

Dear Honorable Sam Brownback,

My name is [REDACTED] and I write to you on behalf of my three younger siblings and myself. My family and I are requesting your consideration on the safety and airworthiness of a general aviation plane: the Mitsubishi MU-2. Its crash frequency and history is alarming, and poses a genuine concern for many still flying the plane today.

My interest in this issue is deeply personal. In June of 2001, my parents, [REDACTED] [REDACTED], were killed in an MU-2 crash.

Four years after my parents' deaths and in the wake of additional MU-2 crashes in 2004 and 2005, congressmen and senators from Colorado and Massachusetts recently wrote to the Marion Blakely, the director of the FAA, to investigate the safety of the plane. Additionally, my family contacted our parents' Congressional representatives and senators from Illinois, and we are optimistic that they will be writing the FAA expressing their interest in the investigation. It is my family's hope that the Honorable Senator Brownback will also write the FAA and express concern over the unreasonably high frequency of Mitsubishi MU-2B aircraft crashes.

In *National Geographic's* 2003 feature on Wichita, the city is hailed to be the aircraft capital of the world. Clearly, the vitality of the city is linked to aerospace and the aviation industry. The City of Wichita builds planes for all areas of the market and is home to the leaders of the industry. However, the health of the industry is intrinsically linked to the safety of the airplanes that are flying. Thus, we ask you to consider this request to call the FAA to give a thorough investigation into the safety of the plane.

My family was not aware of the MU-2's dangerous history until after our parents' deaths. Many people have been killed recently by the MU-2: the governor of South Dakota, a state senator from New Jersey, Coca-Cola executives, the owners of and a research doctor for the Southern California Imperial Valley Cancer Center, experienced cargo pilots, an army helicopter pilot/deputy sheriff, a Royal Rosarian, a software company entrepreneur, several children, and among many others, my parents. My father was an orthodontist and a land developer and my mother was a writer. They both were highly respected members of their community in Peoria, Illinois. Now they are included in the 33 dead in the last 15 fatal crashes that have occurred since 2000.

The Mitsubishi MU-2B has been crashing with an alarming and now predictable frequency. The rate at which the original fleet of Mitsubishi MU-2's is reducing itself due to major accidents is at a rate far greater than any like-model on the market today. On the next page you will find a detailed five-year history of fatal Mitsubishi MU-2 air crashes and a table summarizing the yearly rates of similar aircraft fleet reduction due to major accidents.

Letter on behalf of [REDACTED]

page 1 of 6

Fatal Mitsubishi MU-2 Crashes from years 2000 – 2005

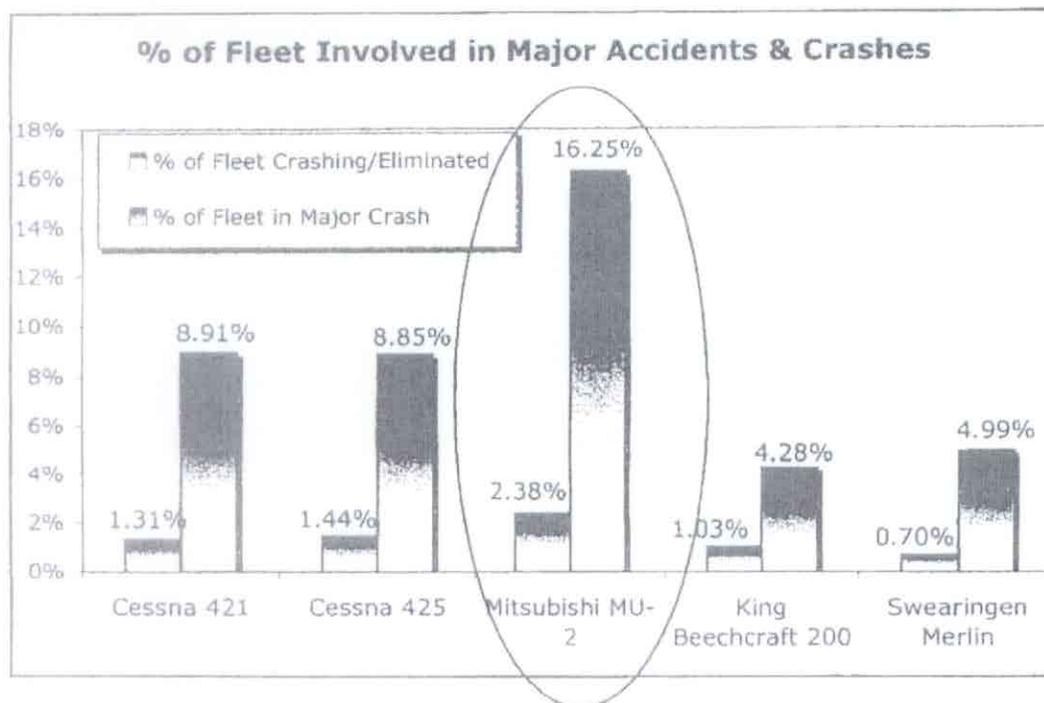
Date	Crash Location	Number of Fatalities	Mitsubishi Model	Crash Circumstances	Victims
8/4/2005	Englewood, CO	1	Mitsubishi MU 2B-60	Crashed on approach to destination airport	[REDACTED] (American Check Transport)
5/24/2005	Hillsboro, OR	4	Mitsubishi MU 2B-25	Engine failure on take-off	[REDACTED] II (Royal Rosarians of Portland's Rose Festival)
4/14/2005	Nigata, Japan	4	Mitsubishi MU 2	Information unavailable	Japan Air Self Defense Force (JASDF) - [REDACTED]
12/10/2004	Englewood, CO	2	Mitsubishi MU 2B-60	Engine failure on take-off	[REDACTED] (American Check Transport)
5/14/2004	Ferndale, MD	1	Mitsubishi MU 2B-40	Crashed on approach to destination airport	Aviation Cargo Pilot, Federal Reserve Checks)
3/25/2004	Pittsfield, MA	1	Mitsubishi MU 2B-35	Plane experienced troubles at high altitude mid-flight and was unable to recover	[REDACTED] (Royal Air Freight Cargo Service, carrying screws)
3/11/2004	Napa, CA	2	Mitsubishi MU 2B-40	Crashed on approach to destination airport	[REDACTED] & dog Teddi (Imperial Valley Cancer Center, Doctor & Researcher)
7/1/2003	Belém, Brazil	4	Mitsubishi MU 2B-35	Crashed on approach to destination airport	Heringer Taxi Aéreo
4/15/2002	Carolina, Puerto Rico	2	Mitsubishi MU 2B-35	Crashed while circling destination airport	Maxfly Aviation
8/1/2001	Hilton Head, SC	1	Mitsubishi MU 2B-35	Crash related to mechanical flap problems on approach to destination airport	[REDACTED] (an Army helicopter pilot/deputy sheriff working for Bankair Inc.)
6/10/2001	Cerrillos, NM	2	Mitsubishi MU 2B-20	Crashed on approach to destination airport	[REDACTED] (Orthodontist, Land-Developer, and Writer)
5/1/2001	The Woodlands, TX	2	Mitsubishi MU 2B-40	80 gallon wing-tip tank broke off minutes after take-off	[REDACTED] (local business owners)
10/6/2000	Edgartown, MA	4	Mitsubishi MU 2B-26A	Crashed on approach to destination airport	[REDACTED] his wife, and 2 children (State Senator from New Jersey)
2/11/2000	Lewiston, ID	1	Mitsubishi MU 2B-35	Dual-engine flame-out on approach to destination airport	American Check Transport
1/22/2000	San Antonio, TX	2	Mitsubishi MU 2B-26A	Engine failure on take-off	[REDACTED] (Floreat - computer software owner/entrepreneur)

The following information was gathered from the Aircraft Crash Records Office in Geneva, Switzerland and this data can be easily accessed at <http://www.baaa-acro.com/>. The site includes not only the MU-2 crashes in the United States, but also crashes that have occurred in Japan, South America, Europe, and Australia. The available information, however, is unclear as to the exact number of MU-2s flying in 2000. While a fatal and major accident ends the usability of the aircraft, many other MU-2s have also been retired; thus, other sources of information indicate that only 500 MU-2s were flying in 2000.

These conservative estimates show the MU-2 fleet reducing two or even three times as fast as other comparable planes. Further, if there were in fact only 500 MU-2s operating in 2000, then the statistical crash history is even worse.

	Cessna 421	Cessna 425	Mitsubishi MU-2 Marquise & Solitaire	King Beechcraft 200	Swearingen Merlin
Total Number in the Fleet	1909	226	831	2404	901
Total Number of Major Accidents	170	20	135	103	45
Number of Planes Theoretically Operating in 2000	1762	209	713	2325	862
Number of Major Accidents in the Last 5 Years	23	3	17	24	6
Number of Major & Fatal Accidents in Last 5 Years	20	2	15	17	4
Percentage of Fleet Involved in Major Accident	8.91%	8.85%	16.25%	4.28%	4.99%
Percentage of Fleet Crashing/Eliminating from 2000-2005	1.31%	1.44%	2.38%	1.03%	0.70%
Average Percentage Per Year (Computed using a 5.5 Year Period)	0.24%	0.26%	0.43%	0.19%	0.13%

* The Swiss website categorizes the MU-2 in two different ways: the "Solitaire" (which has a standard fuselage) and the "Marquise" (which has a stretched fuselage) series. The MU-2B is the most common model and features a standard fuselage.



As evidenced by the above chart, the frequency with which the MU-2 crashes is far worse than these similar twin-engine turbo-prop aircrafts.

Problems with the MU-2 are not limited to the past five years. In 1993, Governor George Mickelson of South Dakota died in a MU-2B-60 when a blade on the left propeller broke off mid-flight causing the plane to crash. Following the National Travel Safety Bureau's ("NTSB") investigation of the crash, the Federal Aviation Administration ("FAA") issued Airworthiness Directives ("AD") AD 93-09-04 and AD 93-12-01 which called for every MU-2B's propeller hub to be inspected for cracks. The FAA took into account a similar non-fatal MU-2B-60 crash in Utica, New York where a propeller blade also broke off mid-flight on September 27, 1991. Following the deaths of Coca-Cola executives in Malad City, Idaho, on January 15, 1996, the FAA made recommendations regarding seat heaters and the icing system of the plane. In the midst of ten fatal Mitsubishi MU-2 crashes in the year 1981 alone, the FAA conducted an investigation of this deadly plane, but classified the outcome.

On March 24, 1983, a cargo pilot, his wife, and their two young children all died when their Mitsubishi MU-2B-60 structurally broke apart and crashed mid-flight in Jeffersonville, Georgia. The NTSB speculated that that this crash might have been caused when the pilot attempted to recover from engine problems, resulting in an uncontrolled descent. The NTSB recognized that the MU-2 had been involved in many accidents, some of which included uncontrolled descents for unexplained reasons. As a result, the NTSB investigators in 1983 made the following observations and recommendations to the FAA:

Conduct a special certification review of Mitsubishi MU-2 airplanes relative to the engines, fuel system, autopilot, and flight control systems; flight in known icing conditions; engine inoperative characteristics; and handling characteristics during IMC [Instrument Meteorological Condition] landing approaches; and take the appropriate action to correct any deficiencies identified.

Interestingly, in Congressman Tom Tancredo's letter to Marion Blakey, the director of the FAA, on June 23, 2005, the NTSB's earlier findings were echoed when he stated "several MU-2B incidents involved propeller failures, while others involved what pilots described as a 'loss of power' or 'loss of torque.' Therefore, it may very well be that there is a much more insidious problem inherent in this aircraft—something having to do with fuel or air flow disruption to engines." Twenty years ago, the NTSB investigators were calling for an investigation into the MU-2. Sadly, answers are yet to be given, and countless people have lost their lives during the interim.

Mitsubishi and its supporting divisions are quick to blame pilots for the countless accidents – pilots need more training, Mitsubishi claims. But how much training is enough training? Bankair pilot [REDACTED] was both an army helicopter pilot and an experienced cargo pilot with 4,000 total flight hours, and he was killed while flying a MU-2. Cargo pilot [REDACTED] accumulated 2,000 MU-2 hours and an additional 4,500 flight hours in other aircraft, and he lost his life while flying a MU-2. Cargo pilot [REDACTED] who was killed while flying a MU-2B, had already earned 6,800 total flight hours and was part of an elite group of cargo pilots known as the "freight dogs." Further, the pilot of the MU-2B crash in Hillsboro, Oregon earlier this year had 17,000 total flight hours and had reportedly flown in three of four different Mitsubishi MU-2B planes since the early 1980s. Extensive experience and training did not save these elite pilots, and the unacceptable frequency of crashes will likely not be reduced by an "MU-2 certificate rating" or added required training hours.

Confronted with this indisputable data, Mitsubishi still claims that the MU-2 is a safe plane. In fact, Ralph Sorrells, the deputy general manager for the Mitsubishi aircraft product support division of Addison, Texas-based Mitsubishi Heavy Industries of America said, "I don't see any reason why the FAA would ever ground the plane."

History, however, and the list of dead community leaders speak otherwise about the safety of the Mitsubishi MU-2B. A safe aircraft does not have a repeated history of cracking propeller blades. A safe aircraft does not break apart mid-flight. A safe aircraft does not reduce its aircraft fleet at a rate far greater than its comparable models. And finally, a safe aircraft does not crash repeatedly and mysteriously time and time again. Investigators, politicians, and victims have been demanding a thorough investigation into the safety of the Mitsubishi MU-2 for the last 25 years. This plane is unsafe and poses a constant and predictable threat to users.

My family and I appreciate your time and consideration and hope that you will consider joining the present effort and help seek answers on these victims' behalf. We would be happy to speak with you at any time or share with you any additional resources, knowledge, or information we may have.

I would be happy to speak with you at any time or share with you any additional resources, knowledge, or information I may have. My e-mail address is [REDACTED] and my telephone number is [REDACTED]. Feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you again for your time and your courage to stand up for what is right, protect hundreds of MU-2 pilots flying today, and demand an explanation for the high frequency of Mitsubishi MU-2B crashes.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Log # FAA-050930-008
To HOA-3 AUG/A112
9/28/05



Sam Brownback

UNITED STATES SENATOR ■ KANSAS

Fax

To: _____

OFFICE: FAA

FAX NO: (202) 267-8210

FROM: Jamie Woodworth

PHONE: (316) 264-8066

DATE: September 28, 05

PAGES (including this cover sheet): 9

NOTES: _____
