



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

800 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

April 4, 2019

The Honorable Roger F. Wicker
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker:

This is in response to your April 2, 2019 letter regarding allegations of insufficient training and improper certification of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Aviation Safety Inspectors. Your letter expresses concern, in particular, that certain FAA members of the Boeing 737 MAX Flight Standardization Board may not have been appropriately qualified, and, if they were not, whether that may have led to an inadequate evaluation of the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS) on that aircraft. You asked for the FAA's response by April 16, 2019.

We take very seriously your letter and the allegations that it conveys. While we prepare a fuller response to your letter, we provide this initial information to address issues that you have raised.

In November 2018, the FAA's Office of Audit and Evaluation initiated an investigation into concerns raised by one of our Aviation Safety Inspectors, who alleged that safety inspectors within the FAA's Aircraft Evaluation Group did not meet mandatory training requirements. These allegations were specific to the Aircraft Evaluation Group—and not about inspectors with the Flight Standardization Board for the Boeing 737 MAX, who have their own, specific training requirements. Further, we can confirm that all of the flight inspectors who participated in the Boeing 737 MAX Flight Standardization Board certification activities were fully qualified for these activities.

With respect to the particular, different concerns raised by this Aviation Safety Inspector, the allegations, including acts of retaliation, were substantiated during the investigation and will be remedied as soon as possible. The front line manager that was found to have retaliated against our inspector is no longer with the FAA.

The FAA is a team of talented and dedicated professionals. We encourage all employees to raise issues that may compromise our safety standards through the utilization of strong whistleblower protection and internal investigation programs. We take all grievances and allegations seriously and retaliation is never tolerated.

We continue to prepare a fuller response to your letter. If you have any questions or require additional information in the meantime, please contact me or my staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DK Elwell", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Daniel K. Elwell
Acting Administrator