

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration

August 19, 2020

The Honorable Roger Wicker Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation United States Senate Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As required by Section 216 of the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-254), the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is to provide a report to the appropriate committees of Congress on the Administration's progress with respect to: (1) determining what additional model input and labor distribution codes are needed to identify Organization Designation Authorization (ODA) oversight staffing needs; (2) developing and implementing system-based evaluation criteria and risk-based tools to aid ODA team members in targeting their oversight activities; (3) developing agreements and processes for sharing resources to ensure adequate oversight of ODA personnel performing certification and inspection work at supplier and company facilities; and (4) ensuring full utilization of ODA authority. This letter provides the report.

The ODA program is the means by which the FAA authorizes an organization to act as a representative of the FAA, allowing the organization to conduct inspections and tests, and to issue certificates on behalf of the FAA. ODA holders must meet certain qualification requirements, including sufficient experience and expertise in FAA certification processes, in order to receive such authorization. They must have a staff of qualified individuals and comply with an approved ODA procedures manual. The FAA monitors ODA performance through a rigorous oversight program.

## 1) <u>Additional Model Input and Labor Distribution Codes Needed to Identify ODA Oversight</u> <u>Staffing Needs</u>

The need for this information was identified in recommendation 1 of the October 15, 2015 Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General (OIG) Audit Report, FAA Lacks an Effective Staffing Model and Risk-Based Oversight Process for Organization Designation Authorization (AV-2016-001).

Office of the Administrator

800 Independence Ave., SW. Washington, DC 20591

# 2) <u>Development and Implementation of System-Based Evaluation Criteria and Risk-Based</u> <u>Tools</u>

This item was included in recommendation 3 of the 2015 OIG audit report, AV-2016-001. In its report, the OIG recommended that the FAA "[d]evelop and implement system-based evaluation criteria and risk-based tools to aid ODA team members in targeting their oversight." The FAA is continuing to develop new policy that would address the appropriate level of FAA surveillance based on the risks associated with each ODA's authorized functions, size and complexity of the organization, and other performance factors.

## 3) Development of Agreements and Processes for Resource Sharing

In addition to the Section 216 requirement to report on the FAA's progress in ensuring full utilization of ODA authority, Section 212(a) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 added 49 U.S.C. § 44736(a), which directs the FAA to "delegate fully to the ODA holder each of the functions to be performed as specified in the procedures manual, unless the Administrator determines ... that the public interest and safety of air commerce requires a limitation ...".

Since the inception of the ODA program, the FAA has sought to achieve an effective and efficient level of delegation for those functions for which ODA holders have demonstrated capability. Through the ODA scorecard initiative, which began in 2015, the FAA and industry have endeavored to improve their working relationships and make the program more efficient. The ODA scorecard is an initial initiative used to promote ongoing efforts between the FAA and ODA holders to identify and address issues that might impede the efficient use of ODA delegation, while ensuring safety. The FAA will continue to adjust the means by which performance and risk are assessed for the level of delegation, as well as for ODA oversight, based on any recommendations resulting from the work of the ODA Expert Review Panel recently formed per section 213 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018. Additionally, we are already addressing ODA related recommendations included in our April 2020 response to the Official Report of the Special Committee to Review the FAA's Aircraft Certification Process. Recommendations from other evaluations currently underway may also be considered.

The FAA also has established a new AVS ODA Office, as required by 49 U.S.C § 44736(b) and section 212(a) of the Reauthorization Act of 2018. This office will help ensure consistency in the issuance of new policy and in the oversight of the ODA program, as well as improve the standardization of delegation decisions and FAA's management of limitations placed on ODA holders.

Additionally, to support implementing section 212(a) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, the FAA is developing new policy and guidance for FAA personnel on how to properly "delegate fully" and work with ODA holders to remove unnecessary limitations as directed by Congress.

We have sent identical letters to Chairman DeFazio, Senator Cantwell, and Congressman Graves.

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me or the Office of Government and Industry Affairs, at (202) 267-3277.

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Steve Dickson Administrator



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The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515

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The Honorable Maria Cantwell Ranking Member, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation United States Senate Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

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