



March 17, 2023

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
254 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
254 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz:

On behalf of the Montana Pilots Association (MPA) and pilots across Montana, I am writing to advise you of MPA's opposition to the nomination of Phil Washington to serve as Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). MPA is a non-profit organization founded in 1939 to serve the interests and needs of general aviation in Montana. By way of background, I have been a pilot for over 50 years and served as a Wildlife Biologist/Airplane Pilot for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) in Alaska for over 25 years. After retirement from FWS, I supervised the aviation program at the University of Minnesota for seven years. I hold Commercial, Instrument and several Flight Instructor Certificates.

MPA is very concerned with Mr. Washington's nomination. Having read his resume, we noted no aviation or aeronautical experience whatsoever, and no indication that he is at all familiar with the myriad functions of the FAA, especially aviation safety. He is singularly unqualified to serve as FAA Administrator. We are well aware of the challenges to functionality the FAA has exhibited in recent years. These include: the failure of oversight of design and manufacture of the Boeing 737 Max; the recent failure of the NOTAM system, a system that is decades out of date, causing a national ground stoppage of aircraft; the "Biplanes Inc." decision, which created unnecessary obstacles to thousands of pilots and flight instructors providing training; most recently a rash of "near misses" by airliners in busy terminal areas; as well as other indicators of an agency in turmoil.

The last thing needed for a struggling agency is to place a supervisor in charge of the agency who does not understand what the agency does, let alone one who does not possess the knowledge and skills to get that agency back on track. The FAA desperately needs a leader who has knowledge of the agency's functionality as well as its shortcomings, and has the aviation experience needed to move the agency forward. Clearly, Mr. Washington is not that person. He has virtually zero experience with or knowledge of aircraft or pilot certification, aviation safety systems, air traffic control, or any of the many other essential functions that the FAA is responsible for and that the traveling public expects and demands of our aviation infrastructure.

The United States' aviation system has long been the safest and most efficient in the world. We have been a world leader in technology as well as in our freedom to travel by air. The FAA has helped to build that system, but now, the agency deserves and requires an Administrator who can step in and go to work rebuilding it to again be the best aviation management agency in the world. MPA urges all members of the Senate to oppose Mr. Washington's nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Vivion". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Michael Vivion
President
Montana Pilots Association