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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <http://commerce.senate.gov>

May 24, 2016

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman, House Transportation &
Infrastructure Committee
2251 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
Ranking Member, House Transportation &
Infrastructure Committee
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio:

As Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, we worked collaboratively to draft and secure passage of H.R. 636, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act of 2016. The Senate passed the legislation by a vote of 95 to three on April 19, 2016, and we believe it provides a bipartisan blueprint that could garner similar support in the House of Representatives. With only six weeks remaining on the legislative calendar before funding for the FAA is set to expire, we urge you to move this bill or a similar companion measure forward in the House of Representatives as quickly as possible.

Ours is a strong bill that makes timely improvements critical to aviation safety, including measures to ensure the continued safe integration of drones into the national airspace. The legislation also includes airport security enhancements vital to guarding against events such as the recent attacks at the airport in Brussels and explosions on flights over Egypt and Somalia. In addition, passengers will benefit from many commonsense, consumer-friendly provisions in the bill, such as those requiring greater transparency of all fees charged by airlines, refunds for delayed baggage and other services paid for by consumers that airlines fail to deliver, and provisions designed to improve the overall travel experience for families and disabled passengers.

Overwhelming support in the Senate for this bill could not have been possible without the cooperation of aviation community stakeholders and our colleagues from both sides of the aisle. We believe that this legislation presents a model for House action, which is essential to avoiding another round of funding extensions that will be disruptive to the aviation industry and only delay much-needed reforms.

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We appreciate the considerable work that you have undertaken to move an FAA reauthorization through the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which includes provisions that would separate air traffic control operations from the FAA. We understand the commitment to this proposal, but the Senate is far from reaching a consensus on this issue. Thus, we believe expeditious House passage of the Senate bill or a similar measure provides the only viable opportunity this year to deliver a bill to the President. Given the timely security and safety issues addressed in the bill, time is of the essence.

We stand ready to work with you on this effort and appreciate your consideration of our request.



JOHN THUNE
Chairman



BILL NELSON
Ranking Member