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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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January 6, 2024

FAA Administrator Michael Whitaker  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Whitaker,

As the Member of Congress that represents Ontario International Airport (ONT), which was the final destination of Alaska Airlines Flight 1282 on January 5, 2024, the residents of the Inland Empire, and as a voice on behalf of the entire flying public, I write to express my deep concerns over the potential implications of the incident involving paneling of flight 1282, and Boeing 737 Max model.

This incident endangered the lives of 177 souls on board Alaska Airlines flight 1282 and the thousands of others who may be in harm's way on similar planes or by whose travel plans were disrupted by the precautionary groundings that Alaska Airlines has taken. America has long held the record of having the safest airspace and flight protocols in the world. That said, Boeing's track record, along with the FAA's safety oversight in recent years, has raised serious, warranted concerns for the flying public.

The 116th and 117th Congressional investigations exposed alleged corporate negligence and failed oversight at the FAA that may have contributed to the crashes of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 and Lion Air Flight 610. The grounding of all of Boeing's 737 Max aircraft in 2019, which included all Boeing 737 Max 8 and Max 9 aircraft, and the necessary ousting of Boeing CEO Ed Mullenburg, as well as necessary changes to the law to prevent future oversight failures, have tarnished the safety record we hold in such high regard in the United States.

This new incident, involving my local airport and many of my constituents throughout the Inland Empire, raises many of the same concerns we have seen in recent years. My constituents and the flying public at large deserve answers:

1. What caused the paneling of the aircraft to blow off mid-flight and were proper preflight safety inspections followed at the time of flight?
2. Had the aircraft been subject to regular offsite repair and maintenance according to its regulated timetable?

3. What immediate steps will the FAA take to address the safety concerns of the flying public?
4. How widespread do we believe this issue may be and how long will the grounding of the Max 9 last?
5. What steps will the FAA take to compensate or ensure the compensation of the passengers of that flight or any other passengers whose flights have been disrupted by the warranted grounding of the Max 9?
6. The FAA called for additional inspections of the 737 Max planes last month following reports of a possible loose bolt in the rudder control system, what did those inspections show?

Trust in our safety regulators and aviation industry must be rock solid to promote a healthy vibrant economy for the aviation industry. I applaud the efforts of other airlines that have taken the steps to ground their Boeing 737 Max aircraft for inspections. Alaska Airlines took the right steps in immediately grounding their Boeing Max 9 aircraft and conducting inspections.

Additionally, it is concerning that this is not the first time that Boeing has tried to look for leeway. It [was recently reported](#) that the company is petitioning the FAA to bypass some safety standards for its Boeing 737-7 models involving the engine's anti-ice system. The safety of passengers should always be the priority and not secondary. As a member of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee on Appropriations, I look forward to working with your agency to discuss next steps on addressing this incident with Boeing.

I am extremely concerned about this incident and look forward to your response addressing my concerns. Should you need any additional information, please contact my office at (202) 225-6161.

Sincerely,



Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress

CC

Alaska Airlines CEO Ben Minicucci

Boeing CEO Dave Calhoun