Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman

Sam Graves, MO
Ranking Member

Katherine W. Dedrick, Staff Director

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July 9, 2019

The Honorable Daniel K. Elwell
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Acting Administrator Elwell:

We write regarding the meetings this week at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in Montreal to review international pilot licensing requirements. We are pleased that ICAO and global aviation regulators are engaging on this issue, and we support efforts to address pilot licensing and training standards on an international level.

In the aftermath of the Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines accidents, there are a number of reviews and investigations underway. These efforts are appropriate, and Congress can and should address any issues uncovered. Aircraft accidents are rarely the result of just one factor. We feel strongly that through the various 737 MAX reviews and investigations, all possible contributing factors, including aircraft design, aircraft certification processes, airline operations processes, airline maintenance procedures, and pilot training and experience should be explored.

Therefore, we write to encourage that those participating in the ICAO pilot licensing review meetings this week on behalf of the United States advocate to place particular emphasis on changes to airline pilot training requirements in the age of highly-automated aircraft systems. A well-trained pilot will always be an aircraft's most essential safety feature. We believe that global regulators must focus on what training and experience pilots need to be able to recognize when a highly-automated aircraft is not operating as expected, how to respond in such situations, and how to operate the aircraft when automated systems fail. Emphasis should be on competency-based training rather than simply amassing unrelated flight hours.

We are very interested in FAA efforts at ICAO related to international pilot licensing and training requirements and request that the FAA provide our staff with a briefing on the events and discussions of this week, as well as future planned efforts at ICAO on these issues. We appreciate your attention to this request. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Holly Woodruff Lyons on the Aviation Subcommittee staff at (202) 226-3220.

Sincerely,

Sam Graves
Ranking Member

Garret Graves
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Aviation

Cc: The Honorable Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Transportation