

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION  
QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD**

**NOMINATION HEARING  
DECEMBER 11, 2019**

**Written Questions Submitted to Thomas Chapman, Nominee to be a Member of the  
National Transportation Safety Board**

*Submitted by Senator Thune*

*Question 1.* Mr. Chapman, as you know the NTSB is not a regulatory agency, and its investigations and safety recommendations are intended to offer continued improvement of transportation safety for the public.

The NTSB Reauthorization Act, included in last year's FAA Reauthorization, required the NTSB to disclose its methodology detailing the process and information used in selecting each safety recommendation.

With the understanding that NTSB's safety recommendations are not binding, the intent of requiring this methodology is to promote the transparent sharing of information, including any external information and alternative actions considered in the development of associated safety recommendations.

- a. Do you believe it is important for NTSB to provide information on its methodology underlying safety recommendations?

**Response:** *I agree that it is important for policymakers and those receiving NTSB recommendations to fully understand the safety issues identified by the agency, as well as the basis for and the intent of its recommendations. The "methodology" provision included in last year's FAA Reauthorization sets forth a structured mechanism which should enhance both transparency and understanding.*

- b. To follow up on that, how do you believe disclosing this information will help decision-makers when considering safety recommendations made by NTSB?

**Response:** *NTSB's mission is to identify those actions which could improve safety. I know from my own experience that some recommendations are seen as cost prohibitive or impractical at the time they are made. However, such recommendations often encourage innovation and research, ultimately resulting in forward looking solutions to safety challenges identified because of NTSB's investigative work. Decision-makers will benefit from a greater understanding of the agency's perspective, and especially when there is an acknowledgment that specific recommendations will "push the envelope." In such circumstances, decision-makers should be better able to evaluate the cost implications and practical feasibility.*