

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION**

*Full Committee
Nominations Hearing
November 7, 2023*

REPUBLICAN QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
J. Todd Inman

COVER PAGE

SENATOR TED BUDD (R-NC)

1. In addition to investigating aviation accidents, the NTSB also plays an important role in adjudicating enforcement actions that the FAA brings. Mr. Inman, do you believe it is important for NTSB to be a neutral and impartial decisionmaker in these proceedings?

Response:

Yes. I would welcome the opportunity to work with your staff and any member of this Committee who might have thoughts about the current process.

SENATOR SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO (R-WV)

NTSB Recommendations

Safety is my absolute top priority on this committee. Which is why I pay attention to NTSB reports not only from investigations in my state, but investigations that have recommendations that can improve safety across the country. One NTSB recommendation from 2018 that I was proud to lead the effort to include in the FAA Reauthorization is - to increase the cockpit voice recorder length from 2 hours to 25 hours.

Many NTSB recommendations go unheeded for years or even indefinitely due to concerns about practicality.

1. Do you think that the recommendation process should include a cost benefit analysis or any other metrics that might make them more likely to be implemented?

Response:

NTSB's job is to provide accurate, and data driven safety recommendations. If confirmed, using my experience at the United States Department of Transportation, I hope to advocate for the successful and timely implementation of outstanding recommendations. These are recommendations that, if implemented, could save lives. I understand NTSB has been considering how to better incentivize implementation and, if confirmed, I would work diligently with Chair Homendy, my other colleagues on the Board, NTSB's expert staff, and the addressees of the recommendations to see how NTSB could do so. If Congress decides to task NTSB with including a cost benefit analysis with its safety recommendations, I will obey the law and make sure such analyses are accurate and data driven. To be clear, I will always be an advocate for safety.

Backlog and Timeline

There is a significant backlog of investigations at NTSB. I know that Chair Homendy has tried to prioritize addressing the backlog and the long length of up to 2 years for some investigations.

1. Would you prioritize addressing the backlog and do you have thoughts on ways to quicken investigation timelines?

Response:

The NTSB has done an excellent job of reducing prior backlogs. If confirmed, I hope to use the expertise I developed in my prior work as an investigator to emphasize the importance of

completing reports in a timely and accurate manner and work closely with Chair Homendy and your office on ways to continue that trend and to improve the process.

Reauthorization of the NTSB

I know that it has been a few years since we have reauthorized the NTSB and while it is not statutorily required it could provide additional authorities and abilities to the board.

1. Do you have thoughts on reauthorizing the NTSB?

Response:

It is critical that the NTSB maintains its excellent workforce and reputation. As I am not yet a member of the NTSB and do not have the benefit of the internal information available to the organization, I am not in a position to comment on specific proposals or legislation. If confirmed, however, I would be happy to consult with Chair Homendy, my other colleagues on the Board, and its staff and work with you and your staff on this topic.

Field Hearings

Currently the NTSB rarely conducts field hearings. I believe that having the board see the location of the incident firsthand and interacting with the community - especially if there were community impacts – can be extremely helpful.

1. Do you believe that field hearings are a valuable tool and should take place more often?

Response:

I watched both days of the East Palestine hearing and believe they were beneficial in connecting with the community impacted by an incident the Board was investigating. I also recognize that field hearings require substantial resources, and therefore the Board should conduct them judiciously, balancing the needs of all investigations currently before it. I think the field work conducted by NTSB members and staff, which occurs in each investigation, is an essential part of the process.