

Peter A. DeFazio

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Chair  
Committee on Commerce, Transportation  
and Science  
U.S. Senate  
254 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
U.S. Senate  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

March 1, 2023

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz:

As you know, I served 36 years on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, including on the Subcommittee on Aviation. I have seen Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrators come and go with many not making a dent in the bureaucracy and inefficiency that has grown over the years. Both of you likely agree with me that, in its current form, the FAA is not up to the myriad new challenges to aviation presented by 21st century technology.

You've heard arguments that the new administrator must be a pilot and technical aviation expert—that is not necessary. The FAA is rife with technical experts and has former pilots in a number of high- ranking positions. What the FAA needs is a strong, accomplished leader who can manage the sprawling, stovepipe bureaucracy and restore efficiency and accountability. That person is Phil Washington.

We have had excellent FAA Administrators in the past who were not pilots or technical experts - Michael Huerta and Jane Garvey among them. With Phil Washington, we have a candidate with more than two decades of senior-level management experience in the transportation sector. Before his private sector career, Phil served 24 years in the U.S. Army, rising to the rank of Command Sergeant Major. Anyone who has served in the military knows it is the senior enlisted ranks who provide the backbone for organizational expertise and efficiency. He has proven he can take large underperforming public agencies and remake them into cutting-edge organizations delivering complex projects on or ahead of time and budget.

The three of us all agree: The FAA needs help.

The recent Notice to Air Missions system failure that caused tremendous disruption to air traffic was preventable. The American people and the FAA need a manager who will take control of the sprawling contracting process and restore those core functions to FAA personnel. We also need an Administrator who will take on the Office of Management and Budget and argue effectively for the funds FAA needs for updated equipment and a streamlined acquisition process.

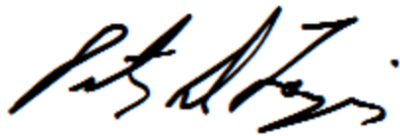
It's time to restore the FAA as the international "gold standard" for the regulation of commercial and general aviation, air traffic control, emerging technologies including drones, advanced air mobility, and commercial space. First and foremost, the FAA must regulate the national airspace reasonably and effectively to protect the flying public. After the Boeing 737 MAX crashes, our committees found the need for major reform in the FAA process for certification of new aircraft and passed bipartisan legislation to do just that. We do not need an aviation expert to figure out the needed changes. We need a manager who is going to see that all the changes Congress mandated are implemented fully and quickly.

Phil Washington will review, restructure, streamline and begin rebuilding the FAA to an agency that is once again the international "Gold Standard" to meet and get ahead of the unique challenges of aviation and aerospace in the 21st Century.

The Senate should act quickly and decisively to confirm him.

The FAA has been without a permanent Administrator for too long.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete DeFazio". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pete DeFazio  
Former Chairman  
House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee