Nearly One Year After Launching Its Boeing 737 MAX Investigation, House Transportation Committee Issues Preliminary Investigative Findings

Washington, D.C. – Today, nearly one year after launching its investigation into the design, development, and certification of the Boeing 737 MAX, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Majority Staff released its preliminary investigative findings. The Boeing 737 MAX, which was certified by the FAA and entered revenue service in 2017, was involved in two fatal crashes within five months of each other that killed a total of 346 people, including 8 Americans. The aircraft remains grounded worldwide.

The Committee’s preliminary findings, titled “The Boeing 737 MAX Aircraft: Costs, Consequences, and Lessons from its Design, Development, and Certification,” outlines technical design failures on the aircraft and Boeing’s lack of transparency with aviation regulators and its customers as well as Boeing’s efforts to obfuscate information about the operation of the aircraft.

The Committee’s investigation, as detailed in the preliminary findings, focuses on five main areas:

- Production pressures on Boeing employees that jeopardized aviation safety;
- Boeing’s faulty assumptions about critical technologies, most notably regarding the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System, or MCAS;
- Boeing’s concealment of crucial information from the FAA, its customers, and pilots;
- Inherent conflicts of interest among authorized representatives, or ARs, who are Boeing employees authorized to perform certification work on behalf of the FAA; and
Boeing’s influence over the FAA’s oversight that resulted in FAA management rejecting safety concerns raised by the agency’s own technical experts at the behest of Boeing.

To read the preliminary findings and see specific examples from the Committee’s investigation, click here.

“Our Committee’s investigation will continue for the foreseeable future, as there are a number of leads we continue to chase down to better understand how the system failed so horribly. But after nearly 12 months of reviewing internal documents and conducting interviews, our Committee has been able to bring into focus the multiple factors that allowed an unairworthy airplane to be put into service, leading to the tragic and avoidable deaths of 346 people,” Chair Peter DeFazio (D-OR) said. “As we release this report to lay out our findings to date, my thoughts are with the families of the victims. Our search for answers continues on their behalf and for everyone who boards an airplane. The public deserves peace of mind that safety is always the top priority for everyone who has a role in our aviation system.”

“Nearly one year ago, the Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 tragedy devastated families and communities across the globe. The victims of this tragedy and Lion Air Flight 610, their families, as well as the traveling public, rightfully expect Congress to act,” Chair Rick Larsen (D-WA) said. “The Committee’s preliminary investigative findings, combined with the findings and recommendations from the Lion Air investigation, National Transportation Safety Board, Joint Authorities Technical Review and other entities, makes it abundantly clear Congress must change the method by which the FAA certifies aircraft. As Chair of the Aviation Subcommittee, I will work with Chair DeFazio and the Committee to address the issues identified in the certification process to improve safety, including the integration of human factors in aircraft certification. As the Committee enters the next phase of its oversight investigation, I will continue to keep the victims and their families at the forefront.”

In the coming weeks, Chairs DeFazio and Larsen intend to introduce legislation that will address failures in the certification process uncovered by the Committee’s investigation.
**Background:** As part of its ongoing investigation, the Committee has held five public hearings with more than a dozen witnesses; obtained hundreds of thousands of pages of documents from Boeing, the FAA, and others involved in the aircraft’s design; heard from numerous whistleblowers who contacted the Committee directly; and interviewed dozens of former and current employees of both Boeing and the FAA. For information on past hearings, statements, and documents, click [here](#).