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April 24, 2018

Daniel K. Elwell
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Acting Administrator Elwell,

I write today with grave concerns about safety practices at Allegiant Air, and to make certain that the FAA is doing everything it can to ensure that Oregonians, and airline passengers across the country, are as safe as possible when traveling on Allegiant airplanes.

As I am sure you are aware, journalists at 60 Minutes found that Allegiant experienced 3.5 times more serious incidents than its peer airlines from January 2016 to the fall of 2017. The unusually high number of safety incidents for an airline Allegiant's size, including failed engines, emergency landings, aborted takeoffs and smoke filled cabins, raises real questions about how the airline prioritizes passenger safety. Additionally, I am troubled by the allegation that, at the request of Allegiant, the FAA failed to act on these reports.

Oregonians fly on Allegiant airplanes out of Eugene and Medford, and I want to ensure they are buckling into airplanes that are prepared to fly and will reach their destinations safely. With that in mind, please respond to the following questions:

1. According to the 60 Minutes report, FAA employees recommended maximum penalties on Allegiant, but those penalties were never implemented. Why not?
2. As highlighted in the 60 Minutes piece, how many incidents have been recorded by FAA where an Allegiant aircraft was missing vital equipment prior to takeoff, such as bolts, cotter pins or other materials? And how many incidents took place on planes departing from or arriving in Oregon?
3. According to the 60 Minutes report, an Allegiant pilot was fired for evacuating a plane rescue personnel reported had smoke coming from its engine. Has the FAA looked into this incident? What can the FAA do to ensure pilots are not fired for prioritizing safety?
4. Does the FAA believe the unusually high number of safety incidents at Allegiant calls for any form of intervention or action by the agency? If not, why not?

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My colleague, Senator Nelson, recently called for the Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General to do a full audit of Allegiant Air. I encourage the FAA to do everything in its power to further review Allegiant, and take all necessary actions in its authority to ensure passengers are safe when traveling on their airplanes.

The FAA has the responsibility to ensure airlines are safe for everyone in the United States. Safety should be the number one priority for all airlines, and safety should never be sacrificed in an effort to increase profits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Wyden". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Ron Wyden
United States Senator