

Chairman Tom Latham
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Federal Aviation Administration FY 2014 Budget Hearing
April 24, 2013
Opening Statement as Prepared

This morning we welcome FAA Administrator Michael Huerta to testify on the FAA's budget request for FY 2014. This is Administrator Huerta's second appearance before this subcommittee, and his first appearance as the Senate confirmed Administrator of the FAA. I think the biggest question on everyone's mind today is sequestration and the effects of furloughs on the air traffic control system. While I firmly support and pursue the principled goals of achieving targeted reforms to reduce government spending and balancing the federal budget, I do not support across-the-board cuts like those mandated in the Budget Control Act. These cuts punish everyone rather than specifically target the great number of outdated, wasteful and duplicative functions being funded with taxpayer dollars. In short, arbitrary, non-targeted, across-the-board cuts are no way to run a government. However, an across the board sequester what was the President proposed and we are now operating under this law.

In an effort to avoid the arbitrary \$1.2 trillion of cuts mandated by the Budget Control Act, I have twice voted with a majority of members in the U.S. House to pass commonsense legislation that would have replaced sequestration with targeted spending cuts of an equal dollar amount. Unfortunately, the U.S. Senate never considered either of these bills — and thus sequestration was triggered.

Further, this goes to show that we need to return to a regular order and consider appropriations bills in their entirety and not rely on continuing resolutions to fund the government. Under a CR, there's no way for us to prioritize cuts or protect programs related to the safety of the American public. We have questions today about how the FAA evaluated the safety impacts of these decisions, the transparency displayed in how you got to your furlough and contract decisions, and finally, what is the FAA doing to mitigate these effects after two days of disrupted air traffic activity. The safety of our air space cannot be subject to political posturing.

As for the business of the President's fiscal year 2014 request, the FAA is requesting \$15.6 billion in discretionary budget authority, a decrease of \$350 million below FY 2012 mostly due to a reduction to the Airport Grants program. The President has also requested \$3 billion in mandatory funding for the FAA in the fourth round of a \$50 billion stimulus request. Until you propose a pay-for, we cannot give this request serious consideration. Similarly, the President has also chosen to include new and increased fees in this budget that have been rejected year after year.

I also have questions regarding the FAA's ability to meet its mission ensuring safe air travel while modernizing our Nation's air traffic control system through "NextGen" investments. The FAA has seen a number of schedule slippages and cost overruns in its NextGen programs,

which could threaten airspace modernization at a time when our first mandate in Congress is to reduce spending and bring our budget to balance.

Finally, I would like to commend you for your leadership and open communication with Congress as you have met some recent challenges such as working to resolve the Boeing Dreamliner battery issue. I'm hopeful we can have a similar, cooperative and open dialogue regarding the implementation of sequestration.

We look forward to your testimony and I would like to recognize Ranking Member Pastor for any opening remarks.