

Chairman Hal Rogers
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Hearing: Federal Aviation Administration
Administrator Michael Huerta
April 24, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

Mr. Chairman, thank you for yielding. Administrator Huerta, I thank you for being with us today to discuss the Fiscal Year 2014 budget request for the Federal Aviation Administration. In this difficult budgetary environment, Ranking Member Lowey and I are committed to working together to move appropriations bills through the Subcommittee, Full Committee and the Floor. Unquestionably, this return to regular order is paramount to the Appropriations process and crafting bills to responsibly fund the federal government while finding areas where these programs can be more efficient. Unfortunately, I've already lamented in other subcommittee hearings that this budget request is woefully late and in its totality, full of gimmicks, tax increases, and generally unhelpful –long on spending, short on leadership. Still we persevere.

In all, the FAA's budget request is \$284 million above the FY 13 sequester level. While this budget provides critical funding to keep the flying public safe, I am concerned about new fees to airports and aviators that could have a negative impact on smaller rural airports. Additionally, recent news reports have detailed a disturbing amount of delays due to recent furloughs. I hope that today you can shed some light on that decision and your plan to avoid similar problems in the future.

Finally, our nation faces a serious fiscal challenge that will determine what kind of country we leave for our children. Through this Committee, we have cut discretionary spending by \$95 billion compared to 2010. This is an historic accomplishment. We have also eliminated over 100 duplicative and wasteful programs to save \$1.5 billion. Through these targeted reductions, we are on track to cut some \$1.13 trillion in discretionary spending over the next ten years.

But more importantly, we need to tackle our mandatory spending problem. Today, mandatory spending accounts for 64% of the federal budget and the real driver of our debt. Yet, I see no leadership from this Administration to tackle this issue in the budget. In fact, this budget proposes to create a brand new \$50 billion mandatory program for infrastructure spending, of which FAA would receive \$3 billion, and proposed to pay for it with budget gimmicks. I continue to be dismayed by budget requests from this Administration which only serve to compound our current mandatory spending problem, instead of putting forward meaningful solutions that could get our country back on track.

Administrator Huerta, I look forward to hearing your testimony and your plans for keeping our airports and travel industry safe and robust through these difficult budgetary times. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

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