



Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Congressman Chris Lee (NY-26), and Congressman Brian Higgins (NY-27) sent [a letter](#) to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Randy Babbitt and FAA Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety Margaret Gilligan calling for a meeting to discuss last week's National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) report on Flight 3407 and to discuss the FAA's progress in implementing these overdue reforms to aviation safety. The February 2009 crash of Flight 3407 in Clarence Center, New York claimed the lives of 50 people including an expecting mother.

Western New York Representatives Lee, Higgins, and Slaughter have been vocal advocates for the FAA to implement these urgent and much needed aviation safety reforms. As their letter to Administrator Babbitt and Associate Administrator Gilligan states, "The factors that led to the crash of Flight 3407 - including but not limited to crew training and experience, pilot fatigue and regional air carrier practices - have been clearly identified, and each day they are not addressed is another day the flying public is put at unnecessary risk."

"We echo NTSB Chairman's Hersman's remarks that we need to have the FAA address these chronic safety shortcomings with 'more continuous and persistent action' or history will again repeat itself with another crash and more loss of life," said Karen Eckert of Williamsville who lost her sister and noted 9/11 widow Beverly Eckert. "Hiding behind the complexity of writing federal regulations is not good enough."

"We've heard the findings from the NTSB, now we need to put their recommendations into action," said Congresswoman Louise Slaughter. "I urge the FAA to make these changes swiftly and will gladly meet with Administrator Babbitt and Associate Administrator Gilligan to discuss these issues. Thousands of passenger jets fly across this country every day. Passengers on each one deserve to fly under a system that takes into account what we've learned."

"The NTSB's report reaffirms what safety advocates have been saying for many years - the FAA needs to immediately begin to address important aviation safety reforms and increase the safety of air travel for the millions of Americans who use it every day," said Congressman Chris Lee. "I look forward to meeting with Administrator Babbitt and Associate Administrator Gilligan to discuss these important issues."

"With all of the findings and recommendations released we must work jointly and expeditiously to take what we have learned and use it to implement a safer system for the flying public," said Congressman Higgins.

Mr. J. Randolph Babbitt

Ms. Margaret Gilligan

Administrator

Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety

Federal Aviation Administration

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Dear Administrator Babbitt and Associate Administrator Gilligan:

We write to you today to request a meeting to review this week's National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) report on Continental Connection/Colgan Air Flight 3407 and to discuss the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) progress in implementing these overdue reforms to aviation safety.

The NTSB concluded that the probable cause of the crash was the crew's "inappropriate response to the activation of the stick shaker, which led to an aerodynamic stall from which the airplane did not recover." Contributing factors include the crew's failure to monitor airspeed or maintain a sterile cockpit, in addition to the regional air carrier's "inadequate procedures for airspeed selection and management during approaches in icing conditions." The Board further concluded that the "pilots' performance was likely impaired because of fatigue." Fifty people lost their lives in the February 12, 2009 crash in Clarence Center, New York.

The NTSB issued 25 new air safety recommendations to the FAA and renewed its request for action on three previously-issued recommendations, one of which was filed nearly seven years ago. These recommendations, the result of a pain-staking investigative and analytical process, deserve immediate and serious consideration by the FAA. We also note that 18 of the 25 new recommendations are encapsulated in whole or part in H.R. 3371, the Air Safety and Pilot Training Improvement Act, which passed the House by an overwhelming bipartisan margin in October.

In our previous correspondence, you stated your Aviation Rulemaking Committee "did not have a recommendation to address (pilot) commuting," one of the likely contributing factors of the Flight 3407 crash. While we recognize this particular issue requires additional time to address, this should not hinder action on other items such as deficiencies in pilot training and rest requirements, which have been studied and cited for decades in a large number of airline crashes. The NTSB has listed pilot fatigue on its "Most Wanted List" of safety improvements since the list's inception in 1990. We share the frustration of many that prior NTSB recommendations have fallen on deaf ears, been delayed or otherwise not given sufficient attention.

The factors that led to the crash of Flight 3407 - including but not limited to crew training and experience, pilot fatigue and regional air carrier practices - have been clearly identified, and each day they are not address is another day the flying public is put at unnecessary risk. We appreciate your willingness to work with us on these important air safety reforms, and we look forward to meeting with you to ensure these recommendations are considered and quickly implemented.

Sincerely,

Christopher J. Lee
Member of Congress

Louise Slaughter
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress