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Congress of the United States
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IN EUROPE (U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION)

February 2, 2021

Mr. Stephen Dickson
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Dickson,

I am writing to express my disappointment regarding the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) delay in publishing the results of its November 2019 tests to determine whether plane evacuations can be conducted safely in an emergency. It was widely reported that the results of these tests would be published in the summer of 2020,¹ but the results have still not been shared with the American public or Congress, now well into 2021.

The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 included a provision that I authored with Representative Adam Kinzinger to combat shrinking airline seats. This bill, the SEAT Act, directs the FAA to establish minimum seat size and distance between rows of seats on commercial aircraft to protect the safety of the flying public. Even though the FAA was congressionally mandated to act on this provision within one-year, the FAA did not begin its testing until late November and December 2019, well after the one-year deadline.

In addition to requiring the FAA to review its aircraft cabin evacuation certification, the FAA Reauthorization Act also requires the FAA to report to Congress with results and any recommendations for revisions to the agency's assumptions and methods for assessing evacuation

¹ "FAA tests airplane seat size safety for first time, but some critics call experiments 'a sham,'" *CBS News*, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/airplane-seat-size-faa-tests-safe-seat-size-space-between-rows-for-first-time/>

certification and to issue regulations establishing minimum dimensions for passenger seats necessary for the safety of passengers. I would hope that the FAA would take its congressional mandate seriously and not utilize dilatory tactics to prevent information from being published that could have significant impacts on the safety and health of airline passengers.

I respectfully request that you provide an explanation for this significant delay and provide a date in which I and the rest of my colleagues can expect the inspector's general report to be published.

I appreciate your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your prompt response.

As always, I remain,

Most sincerely,



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

c: The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
 The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio, Chairman, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
 The Honorable Rick Larsen, Chairman, Aviation Subcommittee