

2163 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2605

DISTRICT OFFICES:
2930 WETMORE AVENUE, SUITE 9F
EVERETT, WA 98201
(425) 252-3188

119 N. COMMERCIAL STREET, SUITE 275
BELLINGHAM, WA 98225
(360) 733-4600

E-Mail: Rick.Larsen@mail.house.gov
<http://larsen.house.gov>

RICK LARSEN
2ND DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4702

COMMITTEES:
TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE
CHAIR, SUBCOMMITTEE
ON AVIATION

ARMED SERVICES

January 25, 2021

Mr. Peter Buttigieg
Secretary-Designate
U.S. Department of Transportation

Dear Secretary-designate Buttigieg:

Congratulations on your nomination to serve as the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. Your commitment to addressing the needs of local communities, ensuring the safety of the U.S. transportation network, and advancing innovation will help the nation build towards long-term economic recovery.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to reduce air travel demand, halt domestic aerospace manufacturing and trigger industry-wide layoffs. As Congress and the Biden administration work on essential COVID-19 relief, part of this effort must include strengthening aviation safety, bolstering the country's global aviation leadership, fostering innovation in U.S. airspace, and restoring confidence in air travel.

I look forward to working together to advance the following goals and action items in the 117th Congress:

COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery: Provide relief to sustain the U.S. aviation and aerospace industries during the pandemic, protect workers and restore lost jobs and improve federal preparedness and response efforts.

- In the Pacific Northwest and across the country, the aviation manufacturing workforce drives the local economy and helps the U.S. remain globally competitive. However, due to the pandemic, an estimated 100,000 aerospace manufacturing workers nationwide have lost their jobs and 220,000 additional jobs are at risk of furlough.¹ In the upcoming weeks, I will reintroduce my bipartisan bill, the *Aviation Manufacturing Jobs Protection Act*, to help prevent aerospace supply chain furloughs and rehire employees who were furloughed due to the pandemic.
- The nation's airports are fundamental to economic growth and the success of U.S. transportation. However, the ongoing pandemic has devastated air travel and airport revenues, which hit airport concessionaires particularly hard, including many minority and women-owned small businesses. Congress must provide robust funding in any

upcoming COVID-19 relief package to keep U.S. airports and airport concessionaires operational.

- Keeping the flying public safe from COVID-19 is even more difficult because of the lack of coordinated federal leadership by the previous administration. A national aviation plan to ensure the safety of aviation crews and passengers is urgently needed. My legislation, the *National Aviation Preparedness Plan Act*, would bring federal agencies, frontline aviation workers and other key stakeholders to the table to develop a clear, comprehensive plan of action.

Ensuring aviation safety: Ensure U.S. aviation and aerospace remain the global gold standard in safety through rigorous oversight of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the industry.

- Congress has an obligation to the 346 victims of the two Boeing 737 MAX crashes and their families, as well as the traveling public, to ensure the safety of air travel. Last year, Congress passed my bipartisan legislation, the *Aircraft Certification, Safety, and Accountability Act* (Public Law No. 116-260), to help restore the integrity of the FAA aircraft certification process by improving aviation safety culture, enhancing transparency and integrating human factors to ensure pilots and flight crews can do their jobs safely. I look forward to working with the FAA to implement these much-needed reforms.

Fostering Innovation in U.S. Airspace: The safe integration of new airspace users, advancement of NextGen and deployment of greener technologies will bolster U.S. jobs and grow U.S. leadership in sustainability.

- U.S. aviation is making strides to improve fuel efficiency, green ground operations and advance new, sustainable propulsion. Congress must pass a comprehensive infrastructure package to invest in 21st-century clean transportation to build resiliency, develop and deploy alternative fuel infrastructure, and promote zero and low-emission aviation technologies.
- Last year, I introduced legislation, the *National Evaluation of Aviation and Aerospace Solutions to Climate Change Act*, to catalog climate change mitigation practices and technologies in civil aviation and aerospace, identify barriers to adoption and serve as a roadmap for action to achieve a net-zero clean economy by 2050.
- The FAA NextGen program will modernize air traffic control to allow carriers to fly more directly and precisely, reduce aircraft fuel burn and improve sustainability. However, the COVID-19 pandemic is causing several implementation challenges, such as restricted access to air traffic control towers and terminal radar approach control/en route facilities, halted workforce training and limited operational testing. Congress, the administration and industry must collaborate to overcome these challenges to ensure the efficient implementation of NextGen.
- Emerging entrants in U.S. airspace range from drones to electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft and commercial space transportation and will bring extensive societal and commercial benefits. While collaboration between the FAA and industry is ongoing, integration of new entrants is far from complete. Congress and the

administration must work together to ensure an appropriate regulatory environment is in place to responsibly integrate these new operations into the airspace.

Improving U.S. Competitiveness in the Global Market: Maintain U.S. leadership in the global aviation and aerospace market through fair competition, robust infrastructure investment, an efficient certification process, and development of future workforces.

- Robust federal investment in U.S. transportation means jobs and is key to economic recovery. Congress must increase funding for the FAA Airport Improvement Program and raise the cap on the Passenger Facility Charge to provide additional funding for airports dealing with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Technological innovation and global competitiveness are only possible with continued investment in and support for the next generation of engineers, mechanics and innovators. Improving skills training is an all-around win for employers, job seekers and the aviation and aerospace sectors. I am working to improve access to STEM-based apprenticeships and career and technical education programs to diversify and grow the U.S. workforce.

Enhancing the Air Travel Experience for Passengers: Enhance the air travel experience for all U.S. passengers, particularly for passengers with disabilities, by ensuring transparency, prioritizing public health, promoting consumer protections and ensuring reliable air service.

- For years, I have championed efforts to improve accessibility of air travel for passengers with disabilities. For the first time in recent memory, the Aviation Subcommittee held a roundtable in November 2019 to discuss the latest accessibility provisions in the FAA reauthorization bill and new challenges facing passengers with disabilities. I am committed to working with advocates, industry and the administration to ensure these passengers have a safe and dignified air travel experience.

The future of U.S. aviation is bright, and will be safer, greener, more accessible, and innovative. I stand ready to work with you and the Biden administration on these goals and other shared priorities to drive the U.S. economy and keep people moving.

Sincerely,



Rick Larsen
U.S. Representative

ⁱ Avascent, "COVID-19 Aviation Impact", commissioned by the Aerospace Industries Association, July 31, 2020.