

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

DAVID M. WEINBERG, STAFF DIRECTOR
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March 19, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Mr. David Calhoun
President and Chief Executive Officer
The Boeing Company
929 Long Bridge Drive
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Mr. Calhoun:

The Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (“the Subcommittee”) has recently obtained information from a whistleblower at the Boeing Company (“Boeing”) alleging alarming and dangerous manufacturing deficiencies that “are creating potentially catastrophic safety risks.”¹ We write to request Boeing’s immediate cooperation with the Subcommittee’s review of these troubling allegations and Boeing’s culture of safety in light of recent incidents.

Recently, the Subcommittee was made aware of safety concerns relating to your company’s manufacturing and assembly of Boeing 787 and 777 airplanes.² A whistleblower, who is a current Boeing quality engineer, has informed the Subcommittee that in 2021 and 2022, the whistleblower identified and reported issues with the manufacturing of Boeing 787 airplanes.³ In a January 2024 letter to the Federal Aviation Administration (“FAA”), the whistleblower’s attorney wrote that “Boeing had begun taking shortcuts” to “reduce bottlenecks in the production of 787s” leading to “faulty engineering and faulty evaluation of the data, which has allowed potentially defective parts and installations in 787 fleets.”⁴ Ultimately, the whistleblower’s attorney claimed that these engineering problems could “cause premature fatigue failure without any warning, thus creating unsafe conditions for the aircraft with potentially catastrophic accidents and passenger fatalities.”⁵

In 2023, the same quality engineer also identified and reported to Boeing’s management assembly defects in Boeing 777 airplanes.⁶ The whistleblower allegedly found “significant

¹ Letter from Debra Katz to Michael Whitaker, Adm’r, Fed. Aviation Admin. (Jan. 19, 2024) (on file with the Subcommittee).

² *Id.*; Letter from Debra Katz to Michael Whitaker, Adm’r, Fed. Aviation Admin. (Jan. 30, 2024) (on file with the Subcommittee).

³ *Id.*

⁴ Letter from Debra Katz to Michael Whitaker, Adm’r, Fed. Aviation Admin. at 2 (Jan. 19, 2024) (on file with the Subcommittee).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Letter from Debra Katz to Michael Whitaker, Adm’r, Fed. Aviation Admin. at 2 (Jan. 30, 2024) (on file with the Subcommittee).

misalignments between parts in the assembly of at least 400 777 airplanes.”⁷ According to the whistleblower’s attorney:

Boeing has ignored [the whistleblower’s] concerns and has failed to take remedial action. Instead, it has retaliated against [the whistleblower] by sidelining [the whistleblower] and excluding [the whistleblower] from key meetings. [The whistleblower’s] supervisor has subjected [the whistleblower] to repeated threats and Boeing has prevented [the whistleblower] from consulting with subject matter experts to implement approaches that would prevent these dangerous defects.⁸

Boeing’s alleged treatment of the whistleblower and its apparent handling of the whistleblower’s allegations regarding potential aircraft manufacturing failures raise many questions about your company’s commitment to aircraft safety. The Subcommittee’s receipt of these allegations follows several contemporaneous reports that have also called into question Boeing’s safety policies and practices.⁹

We want to provide Boeing the opportunity to explain to the American people why, in light of recent apparent safety failures, the public should feel confident in Boeing’s engineering and assembly processes. Boeing must identify the extent to which aircraft safety was compromised, how it occurred, and detail the steps it will take to prevent it from happening again. If Boeing cannot fully acknowledge and understand its failures, it cannot meaningfully correct them, regain public trust, and restore its central role in the American economy and national defense that it pioneered over the last century. Accordingly, we request that you appear before the Subcommittee at a hearing on April 17, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. in SD-342. Please confirm your appearance by no later than March 26, 2024.

Pursuant to its authority under Senate Resolution 59 (118th Cong.), and Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, please provide the following information and documents by April 9, 2024. For the purpose of this request, the term “Boeing” includes, but is not limited to, Boeing Commercial Airplanes, a business unit of the Boeing Company, and any other

⁷ Letter from Debra Katz to Michael Whitaker, Adm’r, Fed. Aviation Admin. at 3 (Jan. 19, 2024) (on file with the Subcommittee).

⁸ *Id.* at 4.

⁹ See generally Ayana Archie, *Before a door plug flew off a Boeing plane, an advisory light came on 3 times*, NPR (Jan. 8, 2024), <https://www.npr.org/2024/01/08/1223427243/boeing-flight-door-plug-alaska-airlines>; Fed. Aviation Admin., *Section 103 Organization Designation Authorizations (ODA) for Transport Airplanes Expert Panel Review Report*, https://www.faa.gov/newsroom/Sec103_ExpertPanelReview_Report_Final.pdf (last visited Mar. 18, 2024); Press Release, Fed. Aviation Admin., *Updates on Boeing 737-9 MAX Aircraft* (Mar. 4, 2024), <https://www.faa.gov/newsroom/updates-boeing-737-9-max-aircraft>; Mark Walker, *F.A.A. Audit of Boeing’s 737 Max Production Found Dozens of Issues*, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 11, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/11/us/politics/faa-audit-boeing-737-max.html>; Antonia Pequeño IV, *Tire Falls Off United Airlines Boeing Flight While Departing San Francisco*, FORBES (Mar. 7, 2024), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/antoniopequenoi/2024/03/07/tire-falls-off-united-airlines-boeing-flight-while-departing-san-francisco/?sh=464e3ebb7b72>; Patrick Smith, *50 people injured after a ‘strong movement’ on Boeing flight to New Zealand*, NBC NEWS, (Mar. 11, 2024), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/50-people-injured-strong-movement-boeing-flight-new-zealand-rcna142405>; Lawrence Richard, *Boeing plane forced to make emergency landing at LAX after possible mechanical issue*, FOX BUSINESS (Mar. 14, 2024), <https://www.foxbusiness.com/lifestyle/boeing-plane-forced-emergency-landing-lax-possible-mechanical-issue>.

subsidiaries, divisions, partnerships, properties, affiliates, branches, groups, special purpose entities, joint ventures, predecessors, successors, or any other entity in which the Boeing Company had or has a controlling interest, along with any employee, affiliate, contractor, or any other individual that conducted business on behalf of the Boeing Company. The period covered by this request is January 1, 2018 to present,¹⁰ unless otherwise specified.

1. All records¹¹ referring or relating to Boeing's safety practices, including, but not limited to:
 - a. policies and procedures for safety reporting;
 - b. policies and procedures for safety management;
 - c. records referring or relating to employee training for safety; and
 - d. records referring or relating to safety, conformity, compliance, and assurance metrics and performance indicators.

2. All records referring or relating to the following programs and systems:
 - a. the Safety Management System (SMS) from January 1, 2015, to the present;
 - b. the Quality Management System;
 - c. the Boeing Safety Intelligence platform;¹²
 - d. the SMS Champions Program;¹³
 - e. Seek, Speak & Listen habits;¹⁴ and
 - f. the Speak Up reporting channel.¹⁵

3. All records referring or relating to Boeing whistleblower policies and protocols.

4. All records provided to the Organization Designation Authority Expert Review Panel formed under Section 103 of the Aircraft Certification, Safety, and Accountability Act.¹⁶

5. All records referring or related to manufacturing and quality control of all variants of the Boeing 777 and 787, including, but not limited to, any risk-based reviews, models, or assessments, along with any safety concerns or complaints raised for these aircraft by Boeing employees or contractors or aircraft operators.

¹⁰ For purposes of this request letter, "the present" means the date of Boeing's most recent submission to the Subcommittee.

¹¹ "Records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

¹² Boeing, Implementing a Safety Management System, <https://www.boeing.com/sustainability/our-principles/caso-report#safety-management-system> (last visited Mar. 15, 2024).

¹³ Fed. Aviation Admin., Section 103 Organization Designation Authorizations (ODA) for Transport Airplanes Expert Panel Review Report at 24, https://www.faa.gov/newsroom/Sec103_ExpertPanelReview_Report_Final.pdf (last visited Mar. 15, 2024).

¹⁴ Boeing, Chief Aerospace Safety Officer Report 2022 (Apr. 2023), <https://www.boeing.com/content/dam/boeing/boeingdotcom/principles/safety/caso/caso-report-2022.pdf>.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Fed. Aviation Admin., Section 103 Organization Designation Authorizations (ODA) for Transport Airplanes Expert Panel Review Report, https://www.faa.gov/newsroom/Sec103_ExpertPanelReview_Report_Final.pdf (last visited Mar. 15, 2024).

6. All records referring or relating to Fit Up Force or One-Up Assembly Process and the Boeing 787, including, but not limited to, all records referring or relating to production bottlenecks or testing of Fit Up Force or One-Up Assembly Process, any economic or cost analysis associated with of the use of Fit Up Force or One-Up Assembly Process, or the Fit-Up Force or One-Up Assembly Process' effect on the 787 lifecycle.
7. All records referring or relating to the Fuselage Automated Upright Build Process and the Boeing 777, including, but not limited to, all records referring or relating to Force Align, any economic or cost analysis associated with the Fuselage Automated Upright Build Process, or the Fuselage Automated Upright Build process' effect on the 777 lifecycle.
8. All records referring or relating to any variant of the Boeing 777 and/or 787 fuselage fatigue, fuselage stress, fuselage deformation, fuselage cracks, fuselage gaps, fuselage cavities, fuselage warping, fuselage-related shimming or re-shimming, or other fuselage-related concerns or problems, including but not limited to records generated by aircraft operators, maintenance facilities, Boeing contractors, subcontractors, and vendors.
9. All records referring or relating to grounding Boeing 777 and 787 aircraft, including, but not limited to, all economic or cost reports, economic or cost analysis, and communications.
10. All records referring or relating to any Boeing employee who has raised concerns about the safety and integrity of the Boeing 777 or 787.

To expedite the Subcommittee's review, please submit the material responsive to this request on an ongoing basis as it becomes available. To avoid any unnecessary delays in this production, please carefully review the attached *Procedures for Transmitting Documents to the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations*. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations



Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations