

March 14, 1965  
1860 Applewood Drive  
Denver 15, Colorado

Honorable Peter H. Dominiok  
United States Senate  
Washington 25, B.C.

To Senator Dominick:

Thank you for your interesting letter of March 2, 1965. I must agree with you that the FAA has made great strides in the areas that you mentioned such as traffic control data, radar assistance and other aids. We are talking about tangibles here,

The area of safety shortcomings that I am concerned about is the area involved the Air Carrier branch of the Federal Aviation Agency. As an ex air carrier pilot, having flown Captain with Japan Airlines and numerous other domestic airlines, along with my Navy Patrol Plane Commander experience in the last war, I am rather shocked at what I have seen in the Air carrier division of the FAA. This may include the entire Flight Standards division.

This section deals with many of the intangibles of safety. In this area many think the FAA is derelict in their duties. I am a DC-8 jet specialist that is considered very competent. Fortunately, I have considerable experience with the air carriers to rely upon, plus I am naturally analytical and interested in anything involving air carrier safety. Ratings held probably match or exceed most any other inspector in the FAA. Many safety recommendations have been made to the FAA by myself. However, for action, I must go direct to the air carrier for adoption of such recommendations, and sometimes secretly so that certain FAA management will not prevent such safety activities. Sounds ridiculous, then listen:

Inspectors have been criticized for being on aircraft that almost crashed due to the ripples that could develop; inspectors have been criticized for downgrading weak pilots requiring extra training; criticized for reporting safety deficiencies of major magnitude; criticized for reporting non-compliance with the safety requirements; criticized for following Washington directive requiring actions to insure a safe operations; and many other areas. Certain FAA management talks safety out of one side of their mouth and take actions to prevent safety out of the other side. Why? They do not want ripples or disturbance of office tranquility. An accident investigation is far less frequent than numerous acts to correct safety. Pressure or pressure groups must be appeased; unqualified top management interest more in violations and Spur progress boards with their colorful flags.

Inspectors have been transferred, removed from flight checks, threatened with suspensions, suspended, abused, received poor fitness reports, denied promotions, when they attempted to tactfully follow their job requirements and Washington directives. Major air disaster probably can be associated with certain conditions associated with the safety programs. These intangibles are not known to outside accident investigators or admitted by office personnel involved with them. Also, the association of safety shortcomings with the terrible consequences are either not understood or not desired to be understood, by certain FAA personnel.

Inspectors throughout the agency talk in disgust at the double-talk, never-never land that we are in. Inspectors say the only way to get along within the agency is to see, say, and do as little as possible. Morale is low due to these conditions. "Junior Mafia" type of conduct, and other deplorable conditions exist. Things are now getting so bad that a major carrier is discussing the conditions going on among its crewmembers and management. This is the Federal

Aviation Agency that has the public trust as authorized by the Federal Aviation Act of 1958. This is the "dynamic" agency that is required to perform unhindered. How can hidden safety shortcomings be corrected when obvious, glaring safety defects are covered up by FAA management with such comments as, "It will look bad for the office if reports of safety shortcomings are submitted and office inspection reveals such non-corrected conditions." (Such investigations often follow air carrier accidents.)

Or the statement when a safety shortcoming is obvious, that we cannot put the blame here, as it would reflect poorly upon the agency. Instead, a crewmember is violated when he is a victim of the condition that the FAA is covering up, when it is their responsibility to correct the condition.

There are many more things of deplorable conduct that is affecting American aviation today. We must have qualified, competent, honest FAA management or the responsibilities and directives are a mockery. Presidential directives, Administrator directives, are ignored, and employees abused if they attempt to follow such directives and the requirements of job functions.

Why haven't inspectors complained about this before? Among the group, this is common talk and has been for the last four years in the agency. Some criticism is normal, but the amount that we have here, with the specifics of dereliction of duty is not normal. Strong talk, but I am putting my job on the line to attempt correction of deplorable conditions within the agency. As a result, FAA management is talking unmerciful abusive actions against me to discredit me or have me removed. The government has spent over \$100,000 on my jet training during the last 2 1/2 years, but I am not allowed to function.

Does it pay to try to act honest, with integrity, to recognize your job function requirements and attempt to conform to them when FAA management wishes the opposite? The answer is apparently no, as can be clearly observed by my "scars" in attempting to correct a known seriously deficient aircraft program that has had many fatal crashes. The previous inspector was transferred out when he tried to correct the conditions. This is the same program that has contributed headline-accidents to the aviation scene in America. I can go on for a long time in this vein, but I primarily wanted to answer your letter with a few specifics.

Senator Monroney, who I respect highly, as I do you, is aware of some of these conditions. His staff is investigating it. Whether I have been able to supply the facts in a convincing manner, I do not know, but I hope so.

FAA management knows of my attempt to obtain an investigation, and is presently subjecting me to abuse that you would find hard to believe in an agency responsible for the nation's air safety. One unfortunate part of this is that other FAA employees are aware of this, that the major air carrier here is aware of many of the actions taken against me, and it is common talk with the pilots and industry management.

I don't believe that it is necessary to describe the consequences of this conduct, the willingness and ability of other inspectors to perform their safety duties; the harm to FAA image and prestige when industry sees such irresponsible conduct to an inspector that they generally respect for his knowledge and safety activities, though they resist at times some of his suggestions.

This is what we need to correct the conditions. A thorough investigation by an outside impartial team that will not make excuses for the findings, that is educated in the aviation field, and who is briefed to a sufficient extent by an FAA employee who knows many of the conditions forming the FAA sickness.

Then, change the unqualified, inexperienced personnel placed in management positions, who lack knowledge, experience, courage, integrity and honesty. The phony double-talkers must be eliminated. Steps must be taken to insure that the existing conditions never again can occur.

Select FAA Administrators on the basis of experience and competence. Surround him with the same type of personnel. Encourage constantly the things that are said in print but which comprise the double-talk, never-never land.

A job can be done with qualified, willing personnel. Do we have such men in today's decaying society?

This letter to you, Senator Dominick, was out of courtesy to keep you informed of the progress with Senator Monroney. This is a big project and one in which I have many well-wishers. They respect me for what I am doing, but realize I may become another FAA casualty. Without the assistance of honest, courageous people that will back me or pick up the ball, I will be lost. The price has already been paid by myself and my family. The question is, how much more must I pay to attempt to do what other highly paid FAA management should be doing. To date, I find, as other inspectors know, this sickness is high within the FAA and a minor DC-8 jet specialist is not going to be allowed to rock the boat.

My apologies to you for a long letter, Senator Dominick. I am not in a fighting mood and may not last the week if I remain in this attitude. I have been told that you are a fighter for what you believe is right. I would be encouraged to have such an individual for this cause.

Thank you for your courtesy and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Rodney F. Stich