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## Memorandum

Date: March 27, 2019

Subject: INFORMATION: Audit Announcement | FAA's Oversight of the Boeing 737 MAX Certification | Project No. 19A3006A000  
Federal Aviation Administration

From: Matthew E. Hampton  
Assistant Inspector General for Aviation Audits 

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

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The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is responsible for overseeing the safety and certification of all civilian aircraft manufactured and operated in the United States.<sup>1</sup> While FAA has maintained an excellent safety record, two recent accidents involving Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft have raised significant safety concerns. On October 29, 2018, Lion Air Flight 610 crashed into the Java Sea shortly after departing Jakarta, Indonesia, resulting in 189 fatalities. Just 5 months later, on March 10, 2019, Ethiopian Air Flight 302 crashed shortly after departing Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, resulting in 157 fatalities, including 8 Americans.

On March 19, 2019, Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao requested that we initiate an audit to compile an objective and detailed factual history of the activities that resulted in the certification of the Boeing 737 MAX 8. We also received similar requests from the Chairmen of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and its Subcommittee on Aviation; the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies; and Senator Richard Blumenthal. They requested that we review aspects of FAA's approach to certifying the MAX series of aircraft,<sup>2</sup> including human factors and pilot training issues; its reliance on its Organization Designation Authorization program;<sup>3</sup> and the Agency's actions following each of the two accidents.

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<sup>1</sup> 49 U.S.C. 44702.

<sup>2</sup> FAA has also certified the MAX 9. Boeing is in the process of seeking certification for the MAX 7 and MAX 10.

<sup>3</sup> Organization Designation Authorization is the means by which FAA grants designee authority to companies or organizations to perform some activities on its behalf.

Accordingly, our audit objective will be to determine and evaluate FAA's overall process for certifying the Boeing 737 MAX series of aircraft. In addition, we will identify and undertake future areas of work related to FAA's actions in response to the crashes as needed.

We plan to begin the audit immediately and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. We will conduct our work at FAA Headquarters and other sites as required. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-366-1987 or Marshall E. Jackson, Program Director, at 202-366-4274.

cc: DOT Audit Liaison, M-1  
FAA Audit Liaison, AAE-100