



Memorandum

**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Announcement –
Review of Controller Staffing at Critical
Air Traffic Control Facilities
Federal Aviation Administration
Project No. 14A3006A000

Date: April 3, 2014

From: Jeffrey B. Guzzetti
Assistant Inspector General
for Aviation Audits

Reply to
Attn. of: JA-10

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) employs more than 15,000 air traffic controllers and is planning to hire over 6,200 more in the next 5 years to keep pace with expected attrition. However, some air traffic facilities employ significantly more controllers than FAA's own estimates state they need. FAA also faces a possible shortage of experienced controllers at the Nation's most critical facilities—facilities that are the busiest and most complex based on the number of flights and airlines serving them. In 2012 we reported¹ that because these critical facilities have higher rates of retirement eligibility, the number of experienced controllers available to manage air traffic and train new controllers is decreasing.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 directed our office to conduct a follow-up review of staffing and related issues at the Nation's most critical air traffic facilities. Accordingly, our audit objectives are to determine (1) whether controller staffing levels at FAA's most critical facilities are consistent with FAA's plans, and (2) how training needs and pending retirements impact controller resources.

¹ *Enhanced Oversight of Staffing and Training at FAA's Critical Facilities Is Needed To Maintain Continuity of Operations* (OIG Report Number AV-2012-039), January 2012. OIG reports are available on our Web site at <http://www.oig.dot.gov/>.

We plan to begin our audit in April and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. If you have any questions concerning this audit, please contact me at (202) 366-0500, or Bob Romich, Program Director, at (202) 366-6478.

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