

EDWARD J. MARKEY  
MASSACHUSETTS

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## United States Senate

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March 3, 2025

Senator Ted Cruz  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell,

I write to request the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation immediately hold a hearing to investigate Elon Musk's recent statements regarding the safety of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Air Traffic Control System. Ensuring the safety of our transportation systems is the Commerce Committee's paramount charge, and Musk's comments suggesting that the Air Traffic Control communication system is "single digit months to catastrophic failure, putting air traveler safety at serious risk," deserve immediate scrutiny.<sup>1</sup> I request the Committee prioritize this issue and call Musk, along with Acting FAA Administrator Chris Rocheleau, to testify about the state of our aviation system this week.

Given Musk's far-reaching role within the U.S. government and his recent involvement with the FAA's information technology systems, Musk's comments could understandably cause panic among air travelers. This Committee has worked diligently over the past few years to improve aviation safety, including in last year's *FAA Reauthorization Act*, but the traveling public is understandably experiencing heightened anxiety about air travel after several recent and tragic plane crashes. Although the FAA's information technology systems need modernization, Musk's alarmist rhetoric appears extreme. If he has discovered new vulnerabilities in the FAA's Air Traffic Control system, the Committee should know about such information immediately. If Musk cannot provide evidence of his claims, it raises serious questions about whether he is using

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<sup>1</sup> Elon Musk (@ElonMusk), X, (Feb. 27, 2025, 10:09 AM), <https://x.com/elonmusk/status/1895129237478162621>.

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his role as a senior government official to enrich his company SpaceX, currently competing for FAA contracts.<sup>2</sup> In either case, the Commerce Committee has a responsibility to immediately hold a public hearing to investigate Musk's claims on behalf of the American public.

There is no more pressing use of our Committee's investigatory power and resources than to immediately verify the safety of our Air Traffic Control System. Although Senate Rules typically require seven days' notice to hold a hearing, Senate Rule XXVI(4)(a) permits the Committee to waive this requirement "if there is good cause to begin such hearing at an earlier date."<sup>3</sup> The safety of the American public plainly provides "good cause" in this situation.

I appreciate the Committee's immediate attention on this matter and look forward to continuing to work with you to guarantee the safety of the American traveling public.

Sincerely,



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Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

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<sup>2</sup> Letter from Senator Edward Markey to Chris Rocheleau, Acting Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration (Feb. 26, 2025), [https://www.markey.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter to faa on musk and starlink.pdf](https://www.markey.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter%20to%20faa%20on%20musk%20and%20starlink.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Senate Rule XXVI(4)(a).