

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 31, 2019

The Honorable Calvin L. Scovel III
Inspector General
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
West Building, W70-300
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Inspector General Scovel:

The recent helicopter tragedies that have occurred in Hawaii have raised public concerns regarding the overall safety of the air tour industry. The U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation has released details of an investigation into helicopter safety which highlights flaws in internal FAA safety culture. The report includes whistleblower complaints alleging that the FAA directly disregarded serious concerns about the safety of helicopter air tours in Hawaii.

We request that you launch an investigation into the specific oversight lapses raised by the whistleblowers as it relates to helicopter operations in the State of Hawaii, as well as policies and procedures within the Office of Aviation Safety, the Western-Pacific Region, and the Hawaii Flight Standards District Offices that may result in increased risk to operators, passengers, and the general public.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to your updates and report.

Sincerely,



Senator Brian Schatz

U.S. Senator



Senator Mazie K. Hirono

U.S. Senator