

**NEWS from Congressman John W. Olver (MA-1)
Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development**

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**Opening Remarks by Chairman John W. Olver
FAA Hearing
Administrator J. Randolph Babbitt
10:00 am, March 18, 2010**

The FAA is requesting \$16.5 billion in budgetary resources, an increase of \$476 million above Fiscal Year 2010 enacted levels. While airline passenger levels have remained low the last few years, I believe the proposed budget recognizes that significant improvements to our aging infrastructure are needed in order to accommodate future passenger growth and improve the aviation industry's performance record.

First and foremost I want to emphasize the need to remain committed to FAA's core safety function. I am pleased to see that the budget request increases funding for aviation safety and proposes hiring 82 new positions in order to strengthen oversight of operations. However, the recent story regarding a traffic

controller bringing children in to the JFK tower underscores the need to remain vigilant when it comes to following safety protocol.

At the same time, the FAA is making significant capital investments to modernize our aviation system and replace our outdated air traffic control system with a more advanced satellite based system. I look forward to discussing the budget's request of \$1.14 billion for the NextGen aviation system and being updated on the progress of implementing ADS-B in Houston. This multi-year, multi-billion dollar initiative is clearly a complex management undertaking, but I believe is vital to efficiently utilizing our airspace, reducing congestion, improving safety, and minimizing aviation's environmental footprint.

The key to any success with your agency's critical safety mission and implementation of a next generation air traffic control system rests upon the efforts of a dedicated workforce. Every controller, inspector, supervisor and senior leader must remain committed to achieving the aviation safety and efficiency goals that you and the Secretary have set. From the statements you have made publicly and those that you have made to me privately, it is clear that you believe every employee at the FAA has a role to play in safety oversight; the development and deployment of new technologies;

assessing on-going facility needs; and the careful stewardship of federal resources.

Finally, I hope to discuss the development of renewable jet fuels. As you know, the aviation industry is responsible for 3 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, fuel costs are one of the largest portions of airlines operating costs, about 30 percent. Last year this Subcommittee provided additional funding for accelerating the development and certification of alternative jet fuels under the CLEEN program. I hope you can provide us with an update on this program and provide a timeline for developing a renewable fuel that meets the aviation's unique operating requirements.