

Aviation Safety Subcommittee Chair Duckworth Reacts To Boeing CEO Stepping Down Amid Management Overhaul

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WASHINGTON, DC – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)—a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation (CST) and Chair of the CST Subcommittee on Aviation Safety, Operations and Innovation—issued the following statement regarding Boeing CEO Dave Calhoun stepping down at the end of the year amid a management overhaul at the aerospace company:

“This is not the first leadership shakeup we’ve seen at Boeing, yet problems still persist and Boeing’s safety culture continues to falter. As recently as December, Boeing was seeking an exemption from FAA safety certification standards to prematurely allow its 737 MAX 7 aircraft to enter commercial use—before fixing a known safety flaw that could have catastrophic consequences on passenger safety. While I’m grateful Mr. Calhoun listened to my concerns, withdrew this safety waiver request and has committed to not seeking certification of the MAX 7 or the MAX 10 until this safety defect is fixed, I remain deeply concerned about Boeing’s dangerous and ongoing pattern of keeping pilots in the dark about features on the MAX aircraft. Even last month, the NTSB found the Alaska Airlines’ pilots were not aware that the cockpit door on their 737 MAX 9 was designed to automatically open during this type of emergency because it wasn’t in the manual. And this is yet another chilling example in a series of incidents after Lion Air pilots weren’t told about MCAS and Boeing was caught building 737 MAX planes with nonfunctioning AOA Disagree alerts in violation of its approved type design.

“This dangerous pattern must be broken. As a pilot and as the Aviation Safety Subcommittee Chair, I will continue to closely monitor both Boeing’s reforms as well as FAA’s oversight to ensure the flying public is kept safe. Passenger and crew safety must come before profit.”

Duckworth has been a fierce, outspoken aviation safety advocate throughout the series of aviation incidents with Boeing MAX aircraft in recent months that have put passenger and crew safety at risk. In January, Duckworth [called on FAA to reject Boeing’s reckless petition](#) requesting an exemption from safety certification standards to prematurely allow its 737 MAX 7 aircraft to enter commercial use before fixing a known safety flaw that could have catastrophic consequences on passenger safety. Just days after [Boeing CEO Dave Calhoun met with Senator Duckworth](#) personally and heard her arguments to put passenger and crew safety ahead of profits, [Boeing withdrew its petition](#)—crediting Duckworth’s efforts during the meeting as part of the reason the company changed course. Earlier this month, Duckworth also [successfully secured a commitment from Boeing](#) to fix this known safety flaw on the MAX 10 aircraft—the same defect that is on the MAX 7, 8 and 9—before seeking certification of the MAX 10. Additionally, as a result of Duckworth’s pressing, Boeing also estimated that it will have an engineering solution to this safety flaw designed within a year—as opposed to previous reports that Boeing wouldn’t be able to develop a fix to this problem until 2026.

Duckworth is one of the authors of the bipartisan [FAA Reauthorization Act of 2023](#) that passed through the CST committee, in which she successfully secured several provisions that would improve safety for consumers, expand the aviation workforce and enhance protections for travelers with disabilities. If signed into law, the bipartisan FAA

reauthorization bill would extend FAA's funding and authorities through the Fiscal Year 2028.