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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

November 7, 2011

MICHAEL L. ALEXANDER, STAFF DIRECTOR  
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The Honorable Calvin L. Scovel, III  
Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
West Building – W70-300  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Scovel:

I am writing to request that your office conduct a follow-up review of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) contract for the Air Traffic Controller Optimum Training Solution (ATCOTS) program.

Having sufficient numbers of well-trained controllers is absolutely critical to the safety of the traveling public and air commerce. An increasing number of reports of close calls in the air, and delays in training new air traffic controllers suggest that the ATCOTS training effort is not as effective as it should be. Training issues may even be more acute at critical FAA facilities.<sup>1</sup>

On September 30, 2010, the Office of the Inspector General published a report that highlighted serious shortcomings in the contract for the ATCOTS program. Among the issues raised in the report were significant cost overruns, poor procurement practices, and a lack of effective contract oversight. In its first two years the ATCOTS contract exceeded baseline estimates by \$46 million, and was not sufficient to cover promised innovations, including reduced training times and costs.<sup>2</sup>

Given the importance of the ATCOTS program, I believe that another review of the contract is needed. The review should assess whether FAA has addressed the problems and recommendations identified in the previous report and whether the FAA has achieved a satisfactory level of oversight over the contract and the training program. The review should also evaluate FAA's current oversight controls and contractor performance measures, including the use of award and incentive fees. The report should also address whether the goals of the

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General, *Audit Announcement: Controller Staffing and Training at Critical Air Traffic Control Facilities* (Oct. 22, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General, *FAA's Air Traffic Controller Optimum Training Solution Program: Sound Contract Management Practices Are Needed to Achieve Program Outcomes* (Sept. 30, 2010).

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ATCOTS program and adequate training of air traffic controllers can be achieved under the current contract.

Please contact Sarah Garcia with the Subcommittee staff at (202) 224-1014 with any questions. Please send any official correspondence relating to this request to [kelsey\\_stroud@hsgac.senate.gov](mailto:kelsey_stroud@hsgac.senate.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Claire McCaskill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Claire" written in a large, looped script, and the last name "McCaskill" written in a similar but slightly more compact script.

Claire McCaskill  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight

cc: Rob Portman  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight