



Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart

*Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations*

FY 2016 Budget Hearing – Federal Aviation Administration

March 17, 2015

Opening Statement As Prepared

The Subcommittee will come to order.

Today we welcome Administrator Michael Huerta from the Federal Aviation Administration to discuss the Fiscal Year 2016 budget request.

FAA is requesting a little over \$15.8 billion in new budgetary resources for Fiscal Year 2016, approximately the same level that was provided in Fiscal Year 2015.

While the overall budget request for FAA is relatively flat, the request includes \$439 million in increases for operations, facilities and equipment, and research accounts.

There is once again a request to reduce the Airport Grants program by \$450 million, along with an increase to passenger fees. This has already been proposed and rejected a number of times.

FAA faces several challenges in the coming years: advancing NextGen programs while maintaining FAA's existing infrastructure; ensuring that certification processes keep pace with the aviation industry's technological advances; and safely integrating Unmanned Aircraft Systems into the airspace.

FAA is challenged to meet these goals while continuing its primary mission – to ensure safe operations in the national airspace.

We must find a way to meet FAA's challenges together in a fiscal environment where we need to hold agencies accountable for each taxpayer dollar spent. We have seen too many cost-overruns and schedule delays in FAA's NextGen programs.

Especially under the BCA mandated sequester, there is little room for error, and we must see results from our investments. We can only invest in our highest priorities if we have the will to reduce or eliminate those programs that are less effective. This is our fiscal reality.

I look forward to discussing these challenges with you, Administrator Huerta, as we work to meet the most pressing needs of our air traffic control system, while remaining accountable to the taxpaying public.

Before we get to your opening statement, I will recognize the Ranking Member of this subcommittee, the Gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Price, for his opening statement. Mr. Price.

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