



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

Don Young
Chairman

James L. Oberstar
Ranking Democratic Member

Lloyd A. Jones, Chief of Staff
Elizabeth Megginson, Chief Counsel

September 17, 2003

David Heymsfeld, Democratic Chief of Staff

The Honorable David Walker
Comptroller General
U.S. General Accounting Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

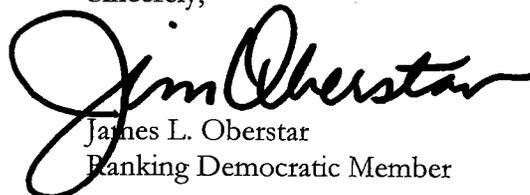
Dear Mr. Walker:

As part of a hearing on September 24th on the FAA's contract tower program, we anticipate that there will be discussion as to whether comparisons of operational errors at towers operated by FAA employees and towers operated by contract employees can be used to compare the safety records of the two types of facilities.

Accordingly, I ask the GAO to (1) determine what is known about the reliability and validity of the data that FAA maintains on operational errors and (2) identify whether comparisons of operational errors among air traffic control facilities can be used to determine the facilities' relative safety record.

In addition, I would like for GAO to include any other issues that it identifies during the course of its review, as appropriate. For further information, please contact Stacie Soumbeniotis of the Aviation Subcommittee at 202-225-9161.

Sincerely,


James L. Oberstar
Ranking Democratic Member

JLO:ss/pk