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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,  
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <http://commerce.senate.gov>

July 13, 2016

The Honorable Christopher Hart  
Chairman  
National Transportation Safety Board  
490 L'Enfant Plaza, SW  
Washington, DC 20594

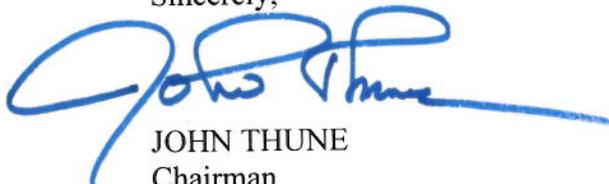
Dear Chairman Hart:

Last week, Delta flight 2845 carrying approximately 120 passengers en route from Minneapolis to the Rapid City Airport in Rapid City, South Dakota, mistakenly landed at nearby Ellsworth Air Force Base. Fortunately, all passengers aboard arrived safely at their destination, albeit a few hours late. However, as you know, this is not the first time an incident like this has occurred. More specifically, incidents of mistaken landings by both commercial and general aviation aircraft at Ellsworth have been previously reported. Accordingly, I appreciate the National Transportation Safety Board's investigation of this incident.

It is possible that the proximity and orientation of the runways of the Rapid City Airport and Ellsworth Air Force Base may potentially contribute to the confusion of flight crews. Nevertheless, given the configuration of existing infrastructure, other factors such as air traffic control procedures and protocols, flight deck automation, pilot training and response, and airport markings and equipment are appropriate for your review.

This week, Congress has approved bipartisan legislation making improvements to aviation safety, but we will be revisiting these issues next year as we craft a longer authorization for the Federal Aviation Administration. I would therefore request that you keep me apprised of the progress and findings of the Board's investigation into this incident, as well as your recommendations for avoiding similar incidents. Passenger safety and national security are of utmost importance. Your efforts and report can help inform solutions to prevent incidents like this from happening in the future.

Sincerely,



JOHN THUNE  
Chairman