

# US FAA warns Boeing its 737 MAX timeline 'not realistic'

December 12 2019

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Steve Dickson testifies on Capitol Hill December 11, 2019

The top US aviation regulator will meet Thursday with Boeing chief Dennis Muilenburg to express concerns the company is rushing to get its 737 MAX jets back in the air, officials said.

Steve Dickson, head of the Federal Aviation Administration, is meeting with Muilenburg to make clear the FAA expects a thorough review of the 737 MAX, which has been grounded worldwide since March following two [fatal accidents](#), the agency said.

Boeing has said repeatedly it expects to win the [green light](#) for the MAX to return to service before 2020.

Dickson "is concerned that Boeing continues to pursue a return-to-service schedule that is not realistic due to delays that have accumulated for a variety of reasons," the FAA said in an email to congressional oversight committees on Capitol Hill.

"More concerning, the administrator wants to directly address the perception that some of Boeing's public statements have been designed to force FAA into taking quicker action," the message said.

"The administrator wants to make clear that both FAA and Boeing must take the time to get this process right."

That underscores Dickson's statements on Wednesday saying the FAA won't be able to certify the 737 MAX to return to service this year given the steps left to complete.

Major carriers with 737 MAX jets in their fleets have signaled skepticism about Boeing's more optimistic timeline and have forecast return-to-service dates in the first quarter of 2020.

Boeing and the FAA have been under intense scrutiny for their responses to issues with the aircraft, including the flight-handling system involved in both accidents, the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System, or MCAS.

The FAA letter to lawmakers comes a day after Dickson faced another grilling before a congressional committee.

One lawmaker at Wednesday's hearing cited an internal FAA risk analysis warning that without fixes to MCAS, the MAX could suffer as many as 15 such catastrophic accidents over its decades of expected use—a much higher rate than for other planes.

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