



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

AUG 6 2003

Mr. Gerald Eastman
11232 SE 222nd Street
Kent, WA 98031-1327

Dear Mr. Eastman:

This is in further response to your letter about the Certificate Management Office special evaluation at Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Propulsion Systems Division, Everett Division and Renton Division located in Washington State.

Based on the 382 allegations provided in your letter, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) formed a team of five aviation safety inspectors that conducted a comprehensive evaluation. The FAA team reviewed all 382 allegations and grouped them into 35 subjects. All 382 allegations were investigated in detail and evidence was gathered to support or refute each issue. The results of our 2-week investigation corroborated several of your concerns. Issues identified in your letter that were substantiated included:

- Failure of quality assurance to audit released Operation and Inspection Records, *three noncompliances*;
- Improper sequencing of operations within the planning paperwork, *two noncompliances*;
- Lack of configuration travelers on file, *three noncompliances*;
- Lack of approved sampling plans, *two noncompliances*;
- Lack of stamps on Manufacturing Hookup and Installation records, *three noncompliances*;
- Quality procedures which conflict with each other, *five noncompliances*;
- Improper identification of designated bonds, *two noncompliances*.

A noncompliance is defined as a facility's operating practice that is found to be inconsistent with the code of Federal regulations (CFR), FAA-approved data or internal procedures. The FAA groups noncompliances into four categories. These categories are:

- Safety related,
- Systemic,
- Isolated and
- Certificate noncompliances.

Of the noncompliances documented during the investigation, fifteen were deemed to be systemic and five were certificate related. A systemic noncompliance is pervasive, repeatable, and represents a breakdown in the quality control or inspection system. A certificate noncompliance is a noncompliance to the CFR that is discovered in FAA-approved data and that is not safety related. That is several FAA approved Boeing documents actually had procedures that conflicted with each other. The team did not identify any safety related noncompliances, nor could the team substantiate any allegations of corrupt Boeing quality assurance practices.

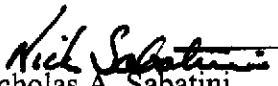
The team also asked the Flight Standards Division to perform an audit of Propulsion Systems Division's FAA approved repair station. Flight Standards inspectors performed an audit about 2 weeks after the conclusion of the investigation identified above. The Flight Standards Division review found no regulatory issues.

Each of the substantiated concerns has been communicated in writing to the Director of Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, Quality - Regulatory Administration. The director has been requested to respond to each of the noted concerns and provide a root cause analysis and proposed corrective actions to prevent recurrence.

This office is committed to ensuring that Boeing meets the requirements of Title 14 CFR and manufactures safe airplanes.

Please be assured that we take your issues seriously and will take the necessary steps to correct identified noncompliances to the FAA regulations.

Sincerely,


Nicholas A. Sabatini
Associate Administrator for
Regulation and Certification