REPORT FINDS FUNDING UNCERTAINTY HAMPERS FAA'S OPS

News / Business aviation

The chairman of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee reiterated his call for

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reform of theU.S. FAA after a government watchdog found that funding uncertainty over the past eight years has hampered the agency's ability to perform its mission.

"This [Government Accountability Office] report further highlights the need for Congress to take a comprehensive look at reforming the FAA after decades of **budget uncertainty** and inability to meet its critical deadlines," said Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.). "It's clear that we need to come together to find a new path forward that ensures that Americans can travel our skies safely and more efficiently, and that U.S. aviation is globally competitive well into the future." Shuster, who requested the GAO investigation, has been pushing his proposal to create a user-funded independent organization to run the nation's air traffic control organization. The proposal, which is generating staunch opposition from business aviation group, is expected to be the centerpiece of Shuster's reauthorization bill.

The report traced back to disruptions from lapses in authorization, funding and/or sequestration. It found that controller staffing has been affected, as have certain NextGen efforts, such as the En Route Full Services of Data Communications program (Data Comm). The report found that the FAA could benefit from budgetary flexibilities that other departments, including NASA and the Department of Defense, have. The report also acknowledges other budgetary options, such as a restructured ATC organization, but said those options "may not fully address budget uncertainty."

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