

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 2, 2026

The Honorable Bryan Bedford
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Bedford,

On January 2, near Superior, Arizona, a helicopter crashed after striking a recreational slackline suspended in Telegraph Canyon, tragically killing Pilot David McCarty and passengers Katelyn Heideman, Rachel McCarty, and Faith McCarty. This accident highlights the potential aviation safety risks posed by slacklines and other recreational obstructions that may be difficult for pilots to detect, particularly in remote areas. To prevent another similar accident, it is critical that the Federal Aviation Administration take steps to ensure awareness of slacklines, as well as strengthen current FAA regulations surrounding the standardized marking of obstructions.

According to a preliminary National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) report, the slackline involved in the Superior accident had been marked with a signalization line intended to increase its visibility to pilots, and a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) was active in the area. However, first responders reported that approximately one hour after the accident, a second helicopter flying a similar route passed roughly ten feet beneath the signalization line that remained suspended, suggesting that despite the issuance of a NOTAM, pilots operating in the area may not have been aware of or easily able to identify the obstruction.

As the NTSB continues its investigation into the crash, we request that the FAA provide updates regarding any actions the agency is considering to address the safety concerns raised in the preliminary report. Specifically, we ask that the FAA explore steps that can be taken to improve awareness of slacklines and similar obstructions, strengthen guidance or regulations regarding the standardized marking of slacklines, and enhance pilot awareness of relevant NOTAMs. In addition, we request that you provide information on any legislative authorities needed by the FAA and other relevant agencies to improve pilot awareness of such hazards, including to establish Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) zones in areas where slacklines are present while NTSB completes its investigation and issues final recommendations.

Thank you for your ongoing coordination with NTSB and for your attention to this important safety matter. We respectfully ask that you provide a response by April 17, 2026.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Kelly" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Kelly
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruben Gallego". The signature is bold and cursive, with the first name "Ruben" and last name "Gallego" clearly distinguishable.

Ruben Gallego
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eli Crane". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Eli" and last name "Crane" clearly distinguishable.

Eli Crane
Member of Congress