U.S. OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL
1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20036-4505

June 14, 2005

The Special Counsel

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: OSC File Nos. DI-02-1869 and DI-03-0806

Dear Mr. President:

Airframe and powerplant (A&P) mechanics perform critical maintenance and repair work on our nation's commercial aircraft. It is crucial to the safety of the flying public that these mechanics receive proper training and master the skills necessary to perform their jobs, as evidenced by their ability to pass certification exams. One company that was authorized to administer FAA's A & P mechanic exams and issue A & P mechanic certificates was St. George Aviation in Sanford, Florida. In May 1999, the owner of St. George and an employee were convicted of fraud and conspiracy in federal court in relation to their administration of the A & P mechanic exam and issuance of A & P mechanic certificates between 1995 and 1999.

The Office of Special Counsel received disclosures from two whistleblowers at the Department of Transportation (DOT), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Flight Standards District Office (FSDO), Orlando, Florida, alleging gross mismanagement, an abuse of authority, and a substantial and specific danger to public safety. Specifically, Gabriel D. Bruno, former Manager of the Orlando Flight Standards District Office, and Dorvin Hagen, a former Supervisory Safety Inspector of the Orlando FSDO, alleged that: (1) Dawn Veatch, then-Acting Division Manager of the Southern Region Flight Standards Division, wrongfully cancelled a program implemented to re-examine individuals who had received A & P mechanic certificates from St. George Aviation under fraudulent conditions; and (2) Southern Region management failed to adequately staff the AirTran Certificate Management Unit (CMU) from 1998 to 2001.

The Office of Special Counsel required the Secretary of Transportation to conduct an investigation into these disclosures pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 1213(c) and (d). The Transportation Secretary delegated authority to review and sign the required agency report to the DOT Inspector General (IG). The Inspector General's initial report to this office on January 16, 2004, was found to be deficient, and we asked him to submit additional information, which he did on June 9, 2004, August 17, 2004, and April 7, 2005. The whistleblowers commented on the agency reports; their comments are attached. As required by law, 5 U.S.C. § 1213(e)(3), I am now transmitting the agency reports to you.

We have reviewed the original disclosures and the agency report and supplemental reports, as well as the whistleblowers' comments. We have determined that the agency reports contain all of the information required by statute and most of the findings appear to be reasonable.

However, as discussed in the attached Analysis of Disclosures, while I have determined that the agency's findings regarding cancellation of the re-examination program to be reasonable, and note that the agency has taken steps to complete the re-examinations, I am concerned that the re-examination process has now been interrupted by a court order. Therefore, I am recommending additional follow-up with the agency regarding the status of the re-examination program.

As required by law, 5 U.S.C. § 1213(e)(3), I have sent a copy of the reports and the whistleblowers' comments to the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation and the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. We have also filed copies of the reports and comments in our public file and closed the matter.

Respectfully,

Scott J. Bloch

Enclosures