

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1703

April 24th, 2026

The Honorable Bryan Bedford
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Bedford,

I write today to strongly urge the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to issue an Emergency Airworthiness Directive (EAD) to permanently ground the McDonnell Douglas MD-11 from service following the devastating crash that took place in Louisville, Kentucky on November 4, 2025 where UPS Flight 2976, an MD-11, crashed shortly after takeoff from Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport. According to initial reporting and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) updates, the plane experienced a critical structural failure causing the left engine and pylon to detach from the rest of the aircraft. This tragedy took the lives of fifteen people, while also causing massive structural and environmental damage. This accident, paired with the many long-standing concerns about the MD-11's safety record and mechanical issues, is cause for the FAA to permanently ground this model of aircraft from service, thus forcing the few remaining aircraft in service to be retired.

Sadly, the tragedy in Louisville is the result of a broader pattern. Since entering service in 1990, the MD-11 has experienced at least ten hull-loss accidents.¹ Investigators, pilots, and operators have continuously documented the aircraft's tendencies toward instability on landing, center-of-gravity sensitivity, and structural stress around the engine pylons. Multiple cargo carriers have already decided that the aircraft poses unacceptable risk and have since retired the aircraft from their fleets voluntarily. UPS, one of the last few U.S. users of the type, announced the immediate retirement of its entire MD-11 fleet following the Louisville crash, citing safety concerns.² With a clear trend of users phasing out the MD-11, the FAA is one of the last major entities to have taken no action on removing this aircraft from commercial service.

Following the crash, the FAA made the right call, grounding all remaining MD-11 aircraft and issuing EAD2025-23-51 requiring immediate inspections of the aircraft.³ The FAA has clear authority to act further and ground the MD-11 *permanently*, an action warranted by the aircraft's demonstrated structural

¹ Aviation Safety Network, *McDonnell Douglas MD-11 — Accident Database Results*, Flight Safety Foundation, <https://aviation-safety.net/asndb/type/MD11/2>.

² United Parcel Service, "UPS Releases 4Q 2025 Earnings and Provides 2026 Guidance," *UPS Newsroom*, <https://about.ups.com/mx/en/newsroom/press-releases/financials/ups-releases-4q-2025-earnings-and-provides-2026-guidance.html>.

³ FAA, *Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes*, Federal Register Document No. 2025-19891 (scheduled for publication Nov. 14, 2025), available at <https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2025-19891.pdf>.

deficiencies and declining use. Under 49 U.S.C. § 44701⁴, the FAA must prescribe minimum standards for aviation safety and may prohibit or restrict the operation of aircraft that pose an unacceptable hazard. Under 49 U.S.C. § 44704⁵, the FAA may amend, suspend, or revoke type certificates when an aircraft's design is unsafe. The agency also has authority under 14 C.F.R. § 39.5⁶ to issue airworthiness directives when an unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop in other aircraft of the same type design.

The MD-11's record meets any one of these criteria. The MD-11 has had the highest hull loss rate (per million departures) of any wide-body commercial jet airliner still flying within the U.S.⁷, and the tragically fatal Louisville crash only compounds this horrible trend. Families have lost loved ones, communities have suffered overwhelming sadness, and the nation has witnessed yet another catastrophic disaster involving an aircraft with a long-documented history of mechanical problems. We have a collective responsibility to ensure that no additional lives are put at risk by an aircraft whose design and operational history have repeatedly demonstrated an unacceptable level of danger.

Given the MD-11's safety record, the NTSB's preliminary report on the Louisville crash, and the FAA's statutory obligations, I urge the FAA to take immediate steps to permanently ground the MD-11.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress

⁴ [49 USC 44701: General requirements](#)

⁵ [49 USC 44704: Type certificates, production certificates, airworthiness certificates, and design and production organization certificates](#)

⁶ [eCFR :: 14 CFR 39.5 -- When does FAA issue airworthiness directives? \(FAR 39.5\)](#)

⁷ Boeing, "Statistical Summary of Commercial Jet Airplane Accidents" *The Boeing Company 2024 Statistical Summary*, https://www.boeing.com/content/dam/boeing/boeingdotcom/company/about_bca/pdf/statsum.pdf