



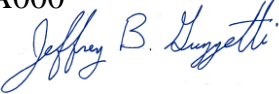
# Memorandum

U.S. Department of  
Transportation

Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation  
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Announcement – FAA’s  
Efforts To Streamline Its Processes for  
Implementing New Performance-Based Flight  
Procedures  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Project No. 12A3007A000

Date: May 9, 2012

From: Jeffrey B. Guzzetti   
Assistant Inspector General  
for Aviation and Special Program Audits

Reply to JA-10  
Attn. of:

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

Improving the efficiency of the National Airspace System remains a key priority for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), with air travel expected to nearly double over the next 20 years. To enhance capacity and reduce delays at congested airports, FAA is implementing Performance-Based Navigation (PBN)<sup>1</sup> flight procedures that use on-board equipment for satellite-based navigation. These procedures are key building blocks for the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) and can provide significant near-term benefits such as more direct flight paths, improved airport arrival rates, greater fuel savings, and reduced aircraft noise. Although FAA has already implemented over 1,000 PBN procedures, industry representatives have expressed concerns with both their value<sup>2</sup> and timeliness. In response, FAA performed a study of its processes—the NAV Lean Project—and identified 21 potential improvements to streamline its efforts to develop useful PBN procedures.<sup>3</sup> However, it could take as long as 5 years to implement these changes.

Concerned with FAA’s efforts to rapidly deploy new PBN flight procedures that provide value, the Chairmen of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Subcommittee on Aviation asked us to assess the Agency’s

<sup>1</sup> Performance-Based Navigation describes an aircraft’s capability to navigate using performance standards. The two types of PBN procedures are Area Navigation (RNAV), and Required Navigation Performance (RNP). RNAV is a method of navigation in which aircraft use onboard radio equipment, such as Global Positioning Systems (GPS), to fly any desired flight path without the limitations imposed by ground-based navigation systems. RNP is a form of RNAV that adds on-board monitoring capabilities for pilots, thereby allowing aircraft to fly more precise flight paths.

<sup>2</sup> To date, the vast majority of FAA’s flight procedures have been overlays of existing navigation routes.

<sup>3</sup> FAA’s Navigation Procedures (NAV Lean) Instrument Flight Procedures Final Report, September 2010.

progress in streamlining its processes for these procedures. Accordingly, our audit objectives are to assess (1) FAA's progress in providing high-value PBN routes and procedures, and (2) the degree to which the NAV Lean Project meets demand for improved review processes.

Our audit will include visits to FAA Headquarters, relevant field offices, selected air traffic control facilities, and various industry representatives. We plan to begin the audit this month, and we will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 366-0500 or Robin P. Koch, Program Director, at (404) 562-3770.

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cc: Martin Gertel, M-1  
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