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# FAA vows to hold Boeing accountable, revamp agency safety program

By DAVID SHEPARDSON/Reuters

WASHINGTON – The head of the Federal Aviation Administration will tell Congress on Tuesday the agency will hold Boeing accountable to ensure the planemaker is building safe airplanes and will revamp its own safety management program, according to written testimony seen by Reuter.

“As a result of systemic production quality issues, Boeing must make significant changes to transform its quality system and ensure the right layers of safety are in place,” FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker will tell a U.S. House aviation subcommittee, which is holding a hearing on Boeing’s quality improvement plan. “I am prepared to use the full range of my authority to ensure accountability whether from a manufacturer, an air carrier, or the FAA’s own operations.”

Boeing did not immediately comment.

Whitaker will also appear Wednesday before a U.S. Senate committee on Boeing.

In June, Whitaker said the agency was “too hands off” in oversight of Boeing before the January mid-air emergency in a new Alaska Airlines 737 MAX 9 and faulted its prior audits. Boeing faces Justice Department and FAA probes into the Alaska incident.

Whitaker, who has said the agency has permanently boosted the use of in-person inspectors at Boeing, in January barred the planemaker from boosting production of its best-selling 737 MAX until it makes quality and safety improvements.

The FAA is monitoring the health of Boeing’s production and quality system by reviewing key performance indicators that “provide real-time visibility into the production system with specific control limits that will trigger corrective action if needed,” Whitaker said.

Senate Commerce Committee chair Maria Cantwell wants the FAA to improve its safety management system, which are sets of policies and procedures to proactively identify and address potential operational hazards. Cantwell has asked the FAA to conduct a thorough review into its oversight of Boeing.

Whitaker said the FAA is “reevaluating our current safety management initiatives and establishing a strategy to revamp our agency-wide safety management program.” He said the FAA is also looks at ways to use the “vast internal and external data resources to become more predictive in identifying risks across the aviation system.”