The NTSB continues to investigate multiple accidents involving Part 135 flight operations in Alaska each year. Since 2008, we have investigated 182 accidents involving fixed-wing scheduled/non-scheduled Part 135 operations in Alaska, resulting in 74 fatalities. Unique terrain conditions, challenging weather, and congested airspace are factors, but the NTSB believes many of these accidents could have been avoided if operators had implemented safety management systems (SMS), installed flight data monitoring (FDM) devices, and ensured pilots received comprehensive controlled-flight into terrain (CFIT) avoidance training—all the subject of recommendations we have issued in the last few decades.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) does not require Part 135 flight operators to meet the same safety requirements as airlines. If the FAA and industry do not address these safety gaps, we will undoubtedly see more accidents involving the traveling public in Alaska.

"Improve the Safety of Part 135 Flight Operations" is an issue on the NTSB 2019–2020 Most Wanted List of transportation safety improvements. That's why we are convening a panel of Part 135 operators, safety experts, and government officials to discuss what we can do to address Part 135 safety issues.