

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-13-657](#), a report to congressional requesters

## Why GAO Did This Study

The aviation industry is important to the U.S. economy and is a critical link in the nation's transportation infrastructure. However, the industry has faced challenges, such as an outdated national air-traffic management system and an increasingly competitive global market. In 2010, in response to these and other challenges, DOT established the FAAC to develop a manageable, actionable list of recommendations for DOT. In April 2011, the FAAC released a report outlining 23 recommendations in five areas: environment, financing, competitiveness and viability, labor and workforce, and safety.

GAO was asked to review the status of DOT's efforts to implement the FAAC recommendations. GAO examined 10 of the FAAC's 23 recommendations to determine (1) DOT's progress in addressing the selected recommendations, and any planned future actions; (2) the FAAC members' perspective on the extent to which DOT's actions address these recommendations; and (3) the challenges, if any, that DOT faces in addressing the recommendations. The 10 selected recommendations covered each of the 5 areas and allowed GAO to leverage ongoing or recent GAO work. GAO did not analyze the validity of the FAAC's recommendations, and our work does not take a position on, or represent an endorsement of, the recommendations. GAO reviewed agency documents and literature, and interviewed FAAC members and DOT and FAA officials. DOT provided technical comments, which were incorporated as appropriate.

View [GAO-13-657](#). For more information, contact Gerald L. Dillingham, Ph.D., at (202) 512-2834 or [dillinghamg@gao.gov](mailto:dillinghamg@gao.gov).

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## AVIATION

### Status of DOT's Actions to Address the Future of Aviation Advisory Committee's Recommendations

## What GAO Found

While the Department of Transportation (DOT) is not required to implement the Future of Aviation Advisory Committee (FAAC) recommendations, DOT and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have taken actions on the 10 FAAC recommendations that GAO reviewed (see table). DOT and FAA officials noted that they continue to work on three recommendations as part of long-term efforts and have ongoing work related to some of the seven recommendations that they believe are addressed.

FAAC members recognized DOT's actions to address the recommendations. However, a majority of the FAAC subcommittee members believe that more work remains to fully address 9 of the 10 recommendations (see table). FAAC members stated that some recommendations may not be fully addressed because they are linked to ongoing efforts that DOT also identified.

DOT, FAA officials, and FAAC members most frequently identified resource constraints and the need to collaborate with multiple stakeholders as implementation challenges and in some cases, noted efforts to address these challenges. DOT officials noted that fully addressing some recommendations may depend on factors outside of DOT's control, such as extending the alternative minimum tax exemption, which would require legislation, and developing sustainable alternative fuels, which is a long-term, multi-agency effort.

**Status of FAAC Recommendations Selected for GAO Review**

Area and selected FAAC recommendations	Status per DOT/FAA officials	Status per majority of FAAC members
<b>Environment</b>		
Exercise strong national leadership to promote U.S. aviation as a first user of sustainable alternative fuels	In progress	In progress
Establish a harmonized approach for aviation carbon dioxide emission reductions	In progress	In progress
<b>Financing</b>		
Support extending the alternative minimum tax (AMT) exemption for airport private activity bonds	Addressed	In progress
Fund accelerated Next Generation Air Transportation System equipage of aircraft	Addressed	In progress
Review eligibility criteria for the Airport Improvement Program and Passenger Facility Charge Program	Addressed	In progress
<b>Competitiveness and viability</b>		
Promote the global competitiveness of the U.S. aviation industry	In progress	In progress
<b>Labor and workforce</b>		
Ensure coordination and focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education programs	Addressed	Addressed
<b>Safety</b>		
Seek legal protections for safety data	Addressed	In progress
Support predictive analytic capabilities for safety data	Addressed	In progress
Review and reprioritize FAA's rulemaking initiatives	Addressed	In progress

Source: GAO analysis of DOT/FAA and FAAC member interviews.