

Hicks Ralph

From: Philip Cianciolo <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, March 4, 2018 1:03 PM
To: Hicks Ralph
Subject: N9673W gascolator

Mr. Hicks:

I'm writing to ask your help in answering a question about what happened to the unusable fuel before the forced landing of N9673W on January 27, 2018, and whether your investigators found any traces of blue on the lower firewall or fuselage. I am asking this because of a prior incident of a fuel leak that may be related.

On November 17, 2017, while refueling N9673W, I noticed a leak at the fuel gascolator. In a matter of two or three minutes, 5 or 6 ounces of fuel escaped. I found that the gasket had slipped out of place. I disassembled the gascolator, inspected the components, including the gasket, found them to be in good condition and reassembled them. The plane was then flown at least 10 hours without incident before the forced landing on January 27.

In the 24 to 36 hours before November 17, and again before January 27, there were extreme temperate changes, in excess of 24 degrees.

My belief is that during the return trip from Oxford, ME, the gasket slipped out of place again. If this is true, there would be a blue stain on the lower pilot side firewall and fuselage. The slipstream could have created enough of a vacuum to suck fuel out.

The suction created by the slipstream could also have been enough to account for the unusable fuel missing from the system.

Could you please tell me if you have any photographs of that area of the airframe that would show blue fuel stains? If not, is it possible that I could get access to the aircraft to view and photograph that area?

Thanks for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Philip Cianciolo
[REDACTED]