



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

Sam Graves
Chairman

Washington, DC 20515

Rick Larsen
Ranking Member

Nick Christensen, Staff Director

Katherine W. Dedrick, Democratic Staff Director

November 14, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

The Honorable Bryan Bedford
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Secretary Duffy and Administrator Bedford:

We write to request additional information related to the Trump administration's recent actions to reduce airline flight capacity by up to 10 percent at 40 high traffic airports across the country starting on Friday, November 7, 2025.¹

The safety of U.S. airspace should always be the top priority; and we are extremely grateful to our dedicated and talented aviation workforce for ensuring the safety of the flying public during these turbulent times. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) must make all major aviation safety decisions with a focus on the National Airspace System (NAS) as a whole and supported by a thorough analysis of appropriate data. We understand the urgent need to address any mounting aviation safety risks in the NAS and the Chair of the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) assertion that this type of action was needed. However, it appears that the administration made this decision without adequate coordination with key aviation stakeholders. The unprecedented nature of the administration's decision to suddenly and drastically limit air traffic demands congressional review.

The recent government shutdown—the longest in our nation's history—had extraordinarily adverse effects on U.S. aviation. As you are aware, thousands of air traffic controllers and critical aviation safety workers worked long stressful hours without pay for over a month, with many worrying about getting a second job to feed their families while protecting travelers.² Furthermore, flight delays and cancellations continue across the country despite the monumental

¹ Press Release, U.S. Dept. of Transp., *U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy & FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford Outline Series of Proactive Actions to Maintain Safety in the National Air Space* (Nov. 6, 2025), available at: <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/us-transportation-secretary-sean-p-duffy-faa-administrator-bryan-bedford-outline>;

² Alexandra Skores, 'The stress is just always there,' as thousands of FAA workers go without paycheck, CNN (Oct. 30, 2025), available at: <https://www.cnn.com/2025/10/30/us/faa-workers-without-paycheck>

efforts of air traffic controllers, airport operators, the aviation industry and the FAA safety workforce. The administration's decision to rapidly decrease flight capacity and eventual return to full service, if not implemented correctly, risks injecting more chaos into an aviation system that is already under significant strain—as Secretary Duffy himself has indicated.³

To gain further clarity into the administration's recent decision and next steps, we request a briefing for Democratic Members of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and written responses to the following questions as soon as possible, but no later than Thursday, November 20, 2025:

1. What communications and resources is the Administration making available to consumers impacted by the reduced flight capacity?
2. What benchmarks or threshold is the FAA analyzing to determine when it amends the rates of the flight capacity reduction order? Please provide the relevant safety data that is informing these determinations.
3. What is the Administration's plan to return to full service? How will this be communicated to key aviation stakeholders?
4. Please provide all safety risk assessments, analyses, reports, and related memorandum used to inform the Administration's recent decision to reduce flight capacity.
5. Under the reduced flight capacity, how is the Administration prioritizing the needs of the flying public on commercial flights over private non-essential airspace users?
6. Please provide the specific safety data that the FAA examined which caused the agency to put these mitigations in place at the 40 selected U.S. airports. Please show how this safety data compare to the last six months.
7. We understand that the FAA identified adverse safety trends upon an analysis of disaggregated data from the 40 U.S. airports in question. What specific patterns and risks has the FAA identified for each of the U.S. airports and how did the agency determine the following:
 - a. The 10 percent threshold for decreasing air traffic; and
 - b. The number of and which specific U.S. airports were involved in the initial analysis.
8. When and how did the DOT and FAA consult with the following key aviation stakeholders in making this decision?
 - a. The National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) and the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS);
 - b. Commercial passenger and cargo air carriers;

³ Josh Funk, *Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy warns of 'mass chaos' in skies if shutdown continues*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (Nov. 4, 2025), available at: <https://apnews.com/article/government-shutdown-air-traffic-controllers-duffy-delays-9afedfa9e5000510c77465808404c830>

- c. Aircraft pilots' unions and flight attendants' unions;
 - d. U.S. airport operators; and
 - e. Any other external aviation safety organizations or experts.
9. Please provide justification for the expedited 48-hour implementation start date following the Administration's November 5 announcement.
10. What specific steps did the Administration take to ensure the 40 selected U.S. airports and impacted air carriers and other stakeholders were able to transition to the restricted operations by the required implementation timeline?
11. What were the daily air traffic controller staffing levels at each of the 40 selected airports for the three-week period prior to November 5, 2025?
12. How has this action impacted air traffic control staffing levels at each of the 40 selected U.S. airports? Please quantify any changes at each selected airport.

We all share the goal of ensuring aviation safety. However, any actions to do so must be data-driven, transparent and collaborative to prevent unintended consequences. The flying public and the dedicated women and men in our aviation safety workforce deserve a reliable and safe aviation system. We look forward to expeditious responses to our inquiries.

Sincerely,



Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



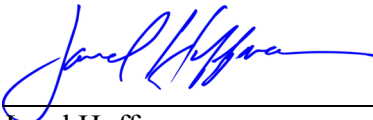
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Member of Congress



Andre Carson
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
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Jared Huffman
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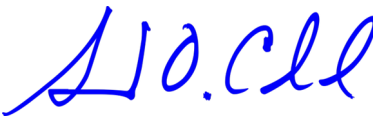
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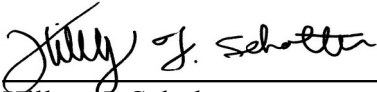
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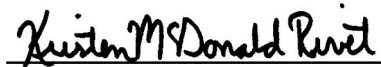
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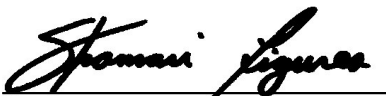
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