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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SPACE AND AERONAUTICS

November 17, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

As a member of the Subcommittee on Aviation, I am keenly focused on and concerned about the safety of our airspace. The nationwide ground stop that occurred on November 13, 2026, has only amplified my concerns and demonstrated the need for an immediate action plan to secure our skies. It is imperative that you appear before Congress to: 1) brief Members on the ground stop, 2) account for the billions of dollars Congress has already provided for modernization upgrades; and 3) explain your request for billions in new funding and articulate your specific plans to accomplish our shared goals of protecting the flying public and preventing future emergencies.

The impact of the events of November 13, 2026, cannot be overstated. You will recall that following reports of radar and communications issues at several air route traffic control centers (ARTCCs) and terminal radar approach control (TRACON) facilities, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) ordered the extraordinarily rare, hours-long, nationwide ground stop. 12,000 flights were canceled, thousands more were delayed on Friday alone and airlines are still recovering. Thankfully, no lives were lost during this event. However, the American people deserve answers about what transpired and what steps the FAA is taking to ensure that it does not happen again.

Over the past two years, Congress has significantly increased funding for improving and modernizing our airspace. Last year, Congress provided $12.5 billion for the Department of Transportation to make critical safety upgrades. In February of this year, Congress provided another $1.9 billion, bringing the total to $14.4 billion appropriated this Congress alone. However, the Administration has only obligated $4.3 billion of that funding and has spent just $1 billion on modernization so far.

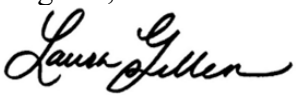
When you appeared before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on July 16, 2025, I expressed my willingness to work with you to help modernize our air traffic control and safeguard our airspace. During that hearing, you gave me your commitment on the record that you would join me for a visit to TRACON N90, which plays a critical role in managing the most complex and congested airspace in the country, including LaGuardia and JFK. I have

followed up with you on this request multiple times over the past year, and am still waiting for you to confirm your visit.

I do not believe it is productive to engage in finger pointing at this critical juncture. I am ready to work with you and my colleagues in Congress to modernize our skies and ensure that the public travels safely and efficiently. In order to move forward, you should provide Congress with a clear plan to safeguard our airspace and a full accounting of how the Department has spent billions of dollars Congress has already appropriated for air traffic control modernization. That is why I urge you to appear before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee as soon as possible to answer questions about the ground stop and the Administration's request for an additional $50.1 billion in funding.

I agree with you that our outdated air traffic control system has been long-neglected and should be a bipartisan priority. I look forward to seeing you before the Committee and to working with you and my colleagues in Congress to get this done. Thank you and I look forward to your response.

Regards,



Laura A. Gillen
Member of Congress