



September 29, 2025

The Honorable John Thune, Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, Leader Schumer and Leader Jeffries:

A unified aviation community writes to respectfully urge you to take immediate action to avoid a government shutdown on October 1. Government shutdowns harm the U.S. economy and degrade the redundancies and margins of safety that our National Airspace System (NAS) is built upon. In fact, short-term shutdowns of just a few days, or even threatened shutdowns that are averted in the eleventh hour, negatively affect the NAS and the traveling public.

The NAS moves over 45,000 flights, 2.9 million passengers and 59,000 tons of cargo every day across more than 29 million square miles of airspace. It is the safest, most efficient, and most complex system in the world.

Earlier this year, our community established the Modern Skies Coalition to wholeheartedly endorse Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy's plans to "supercharge" air traffic controller hiring at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and modernize the air traffic control system. The Coalition also highlighted the need for funding reforms to avoid future FAA shutdowns. We strongly supported Congress's \$12.5 billion downpayment toward air traffic control modernization, and we continue to advocate in support of Secretary Duffy's acknowledgment that additional funding of at least \$19 billion will be needed to completely build a new air traffic control system. A government shutdown at this stage would jeopardize the important progress that we all have made on these efforts thus far.

Shutdowns are extremely detrimental to the passengers and shippers as well as the aviation community because they force the FAA to, among other things, suspend air traffic controller and technician hiring and training, delay the implementation of safety initiatives, postpone maintenance and repair work to critical air traffic equipment, suspend air carrier pilot check rides, delay airworthy inspections for aircraft, defer the analysis of voluntary safety reporting, and suspend work on modernization programs. During a shutdown, many FAA employees are furloughed, meaning that they cannot perform their duties that support aviation safety, aircraft certification, and the integration of new entrants—which limits U.S. innovation in aerospace. Additionally, infrastructure programs related to modernization are suspended, such as the construction of new facilities, upgrading of runways and installation of new equipment. The ensuing backlogs cause cascading delays in these critical FAA services long after funding is restored.

Although air traffic controllers, technicians, and other exempted aviation safety professionals continue to work without pay during a shutdown, many other FAA employees who support them are furloughed. To maintain our position as the world leader in aviation, we must always strive to improve safety and efficiency and continuously work further to mitigate risk. The air traffic controller and technician staffing shortage continues to be a critical problem, and a shutdown would make this problem worse by delaying an already-lengthy hiring and training process. During previous shutdowns, the FAA was required to suspend all hiring and close its training academy in Oklahoma City, which takes additional time to restart after a shutdown ends.

Furthermore, shutdowns are both costly and harmful to our economy. The aviation industry in the U.S. contributes more than 5 percent to the gross domestic product, accounting for \$1.37 trillion in 2023, while also helping to drive more than 10 million American jobs. Government shutdowns severely hinder this economic activity. The Congressional Budget Office's analysis found that the 35-day shutdown in December 2018 through January 2019 cost the U.S. economy \$3 billion in forgone economic activity that was never recovered.

Congress must work quickly to avoid another harmful shutdown. The FAA, its dedicated frontline workforce, our aviation community, our economy, and the American public cannot afford a disruption, regardless of how long it lasts.

Sincerely,

*Affordable Skies
Aeronautical Repair Station Association
Aerospace Industries Association
Air Line Pilots Association, International
Air Medical Operators Association
Aircraft Electronics Association
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
Air Traffic Control Association
Airlines for America
Airports Council International – North America
Allied Pilots Association
Alpha Eta Rho
American Association of Airport Executives
American Institute of Aeronautics and
Astronautics
American Society of Travel Advisors
Association of Flight Attendants-CWA
Association of Value Airlines
Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems
International
Association of Professional Flight Attendants*

*Aviation Technical Education Council
Cargo Airline Association
Coalition of Airline Pilots Associations
Corporate Aircraft Association
Experimental Aircraft Association
General Aviation Manufacturers Association
Global Business Travel Association
International Aircraft Dealers Association
International Air Transport Association
International Association of Machinists and
Aerospace Workers
International Council of Air Shows
National Air Carrier Association
National Air Traffic Controllers Association
National Air Transportation Association
National Aircraft Finance Association
National Association of State Aviation Officials
National Business Aviation Association
NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists, AFL-
CIO*

The Honorable John Thune

September 29, 2025

Page 3

RTCA

Regional Air Cargo Carriers Association

Regional Airline Association

Southwest Airlines Pilots Association

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO

Travelers United

United States Parachute Association

U.S. Contract Tower Association

U.S. Helicopter Safety Team

U.S. Travel Association

Vertical Aviation International