

**STATEMENT OF
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FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

**HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, SUBCOMMITTEE
ON TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED
AGENCIES: THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE FEDERAL
AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

JUNE 4, 2025

Chairman Womack, Ranking Member Clyburn, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Administration's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget request for the Federal Aviation Administration.

The FAA's mission is to provide the safest, most efficient aerospace system in the world. To fulfill this ongoing responsibility, the President's Budget invests in the future of the National Airspace System (NAS) by requesting \$22.0 billion in the 2026 fiscal year. When coupled with \$5.0 billion in previously enacted advance annual appropriations, this \$27.0 billion commitment will enable the FAA to fund critical investments needed to keep pace with industry and enhance the safety and efficiency of our national airspace system.

Infrastructure

As part of the Administration's broader modernization initiative to build a state-of-the-art air traffic control system, the FAA is requesting a historic \$4.0 billion for our Facilities & Equipment (F&E) account to enable the agency to address emerging challenges and technological advancements while preserving the integrity of long-standing capabilities.

The President's Budget includes a \$1.0 billion request to accelerate the modernization of the FAA telecommunications infrastructure. The current infrastructure is dependent on outdated

technology, which is facing discontinuance from service providers and serves as a significant operational risk to NAS services. The agency has pivoted to a new initiative to transition rapidly and safely from point-to-point, hardwired circuits into a modern Internet Protocol (IP)-based telecommunications network. This new initiative spearheaded by Secretary Duffy under President Trump's leadership will ensure long-term stability and the operational efficiency needed to both support existing operations, future needs, as well as meet ever-evolving cybersecurity and resiliency requirements.

The President's Budget also requests \$450 million to initiate the Radar Replacement Program, a multi-year effort to replace the FAA's aging radar systems. The FAA owns and operates hundreds of radar systems that are essential detection and monitoring tools for air traffic controllers. These critical systems are facing more frequent structural deficiencies and maintenance-related issues as they get older, causing increased outages, delays, and risk to the system. The Radar Replacement Program will invest in more advanced radar technology to enhance surveillance capabilities and avoid delays for the flying public.

Controller Hiring and Training

The FAA is in the midst of a multi-year hiring and training surge to ensure the level of certified air traffic controllers needed to meet current and future traffic demands. In February, Secretary Duffy announced our plan to increase recruitment of the best and brightest air traffic controllers by streamlining the hiring steps and increasing the starting salary for Academy trainees by 30 percent. This budget request includes \$97.3 million to further supercharge the controller workforce and train up to 2,500 new air traffic controllers in FY 2026. To achieve this goal, the FAA is filling every seat at the Academy, bolstering the Enhanced Air Traffic Collegiate

Training Initiative (AT-CTI), and offering more opportunities for experienced military controllers to join the workforce. By addressing the ongoing air traffic controller shortage through this multi-pronged approach, the FAA is working to improve staffing levels and increase the safety of the NAS.

Conclusion

Members of the Committee, every day the FAA manages more than 45,000 flights that connect almost 20,000 U.S. airports, and I appreciate the President and the Secretary's strong support as I proudly lead the dedicated men and women of the Agency. This budget request upholds our commitment to maintain the safest airspace in the world by investing in our Nation's infrastructure and workforce to meet the challenges of tomorrow. We look forward to your support in ensuring the United States remains a global leader in aviation.