



Oversight of Department of Transportation Programs and Activities

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Statement of Mitch Behm
Deputy Inspector General, performing the duties of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of Transportation

Before the Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives

Chairman Womack, Ranking Member Clyburn, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for inviting me to testify today on the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) oversight of the Department of Transportation's (DOT) programs and activities. Our Nation's long-term success depends on DOT delivering a safe, efficient, and modern transportation system. OIG supports DOT's mission by conducting audits and investigations that promote safety, economy, and effectiveness while helping detect and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse.

With just a small fraction of DOT's resources, our office oversees the Department's budget of over \$152 billion and its wide range of program areas spanning all modes of transportation. Our independent and objective work leads to recoveries of significant amounts of improper payments, cost savings opportunities, and program improvements. For example, in fiscal year 2025, our efforts achieved an impressive return-on-investment of \$25 for every dollar appropriated to us. Notably, we also focus a significant portion of our resources on critical safety-related work.

Each year, our office compiles a report on the top management challenges facing the Department, as required by the Reports Consolidation Act of 2000.¹ In identifying these top challenges, we consider safety impacts, established vulnerabilities, fiscal accountability, and DOT's ability to effect change. Today, my testimony is based on this report² as well as our recent and ongoing work in three major oversight areas. These areas include: (1) continuing to prioritize transportation safety improvements; (2) focusing oversight to curb fraud, waste, and abuse; and (3) advancing modernization and transportation innovation.

Summary

DOT aims to create the safest, most efficient and modern transportation system in the world. Fundamental to this mission is prioritizing safety improvements, including enhancing the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) safety oversight in critical areas while advancing the Department's surface transportation safety initiatives to reduce fatalities. In addition, the efficiency of our transportation system depends on effectively targeting oversight to curb fraud, waste, and abuse. Opportunities to improve the Department's stewardship include assessing and addressing risks to DOT's significant infrastructure investments as well as enhancing grant and contract oversight and adherence to financial management

¹ Public Law Number (Pub. L. No.) 106-531 (2000).

² *DOT's Fiscal Year 2026 Top Management Challenges* (OIG Report No. 25P9001P000), January 6, 2026. OIG reports and correspondence are available at <https://www.oig.dot.gov/>.

requirements. Along with increasing oversight to better detect and prevent fraud, it is also critical to hold those who abuse the transportation system accountable. Finally, to meet the Department's goals to advance modernization and transportation innovation, DOT must plan and oversee large-scale airspace modernization efforts, safely integrate new technologies into our airspace and roads, and address new and longstanding cybersecurity challenges.

Continuing To Prioritize Transportation Safety Improvements

Keeping the traveling public safe remains at the forefront of DOT's mission. As our work has shown, FAA can improve aviation safety by strengthening its oversight of air carrier maintenance and inspector staffing levels, as well as hiring and training sufficient air traffic controllers to safely manage the National Airspace System (NAS). For surface transportation safety, important focus areas include implementing safety initiatives to reduce fatalities on our Nation's roads and rails while also protecting transportation workers and the traveling public.

Strengthening FAA Oversight of Air Carrier Maintenance and Inspector Staffing

Aviation safety remains FAA's primary mission, but recent events and our work have highlighted concerns with the Agency's safety oversight in a number of areas. For example, we have reported recurring complex safety issues in multiple audits of FAA's oversight of air carrier maintenance programs.³ These issues include FAA inspectors' difficulty identifying and addressing systemic hazards. When inspectors do not consistently review historical data to identify recurring noncompliances, they miss opportunities to address root causes and prevent future issues. We recently reported⁴ that maintenance inspectors at FAA's SkyWest Certificate Management Office (CMO) did not always follow the Agency's guidance when addressing noncompliances and directing resolution methods, which can create confusion at the air carrier about the seriousness of the identified risks. Also, FAA lacked a formal process for managing communication and processing compliance actions during a turnover in FAA's

³ *Capstone Memorandum: Observations and Common Themes in OIG's Recent Work on FAA's Oversight of Air Carrier Maintenance Programs* (OIG Correspondence No. CC2022002), January 5, 2022.

⁴ *FAA Has Not Resolved Persistent Issues With SkyWest's Maintenance Practices* (OIG Report No. AV2025038), July 28, 2025.

SkyWest CMO management positions, resulting in a loss of institutional knowledge, hindered communications with the carrier, and delayed noncompliance resolution.

In addition, FAA continues to face inspector staffing shortages that make it difficult for the Agency to complete all required safety inspections, provide comprehensive surveillance, and retain institutional knowledge. FAA's inability to fill position vacancies and plan for impending retirements has left some FAA offices ill-equipped to fulfill their responsibilities. For instance, we recently reported⁵ that FAA inspector vacancies are at 33 percent for FAA's United CMO, hindering the Agency's oversight capabilities. FAA inspectors' oversight has also been impacted by problems with obtaining records from air carriers' Safety Management Systems. To address staffing and other resource limitations, FAA sometimes conducts inspections virtually for conditions that usually need an inspector to observe in person. This practice could adversely impact the results of FAA's Risk Quantification Models—which the Agency uses to support risk-based decision making and prioritize areas for inspections—because these models do not account for the uncertainty risk associated with virtual inspections.

Hiring and Training Sufficient Air Traffic Controllers To Safely Manage the NAS

Our work and that of others has shown FAA faces longstanding challenges in securing adequate air traffic controller staffing at the Nation's most critical facilities, contributing to flight delays and cancellations. For example, our June 2023 report⁶ found the New York TRACON experienced 170 staffing triggers—actions FAA takes when staffing constraints require reducing traffic—between August 2021 and August 2022. More recently, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine reported that 19 of the busiest air traffic control facilities serving FAA's Core 30 airports are more than 15 percent below FAA's staffing targets.

FAA and DOT have recently announced actions aimed at addressing the shortage of certified air traffic controllers. In November 2024, FAA launched the Enhanced Air Traffic-Collegiate Training Initiative, enabling students at qualified institutions to receive FAA Academy-equivalent training and begin work at an air traffic facility immediately after graduation. Furthermore, DOT announced plans to offer increased monetary incentives for newly hired controllers who successfully complete training. The Department also began offering controllers eligible to

⁵ *FAA's Oversight of United Airlines' Maintenance Practices Is Hindered by Inadequate Inspection Resources, Ineffective Workforce Planning, and Impediments to Accessing Air Carrier Data* (OIG Report No. AV2026014), February 18, 2026.

⁶ *FAA Faces Controller Staffing Challenges as Air Traffic Operations Return to Pre-Pandemic Levels at Critical Facilities* (OIG Report No. AV2023035), June 21, 2023.

retire a bonus of 20 percent of their basic pay for each year they continue to work. Given the importance of increasing the number of certified controllers to safely manage the NAS, we are currently conducting two audits related to air traffic controller training at the FAA Academy as well as on-the-job training initiatives at FAA facilities.

Implementing Surface Transportation Safety Initiatives To Reduce Fatalities and Protect Transportation Workers

Though DOT has shown progress improving highway safety and reducing fatalities—with motor vehicle traffic fatalities decreasing from 43,230 to an estimated 39,345 (9 percent) from 2021 through 2024—our audits have shown DOT can take further action to ensure surface transportation safety. Specifically, DOT needs to establish methods to measure the impact of its priority actions taken in recent years to reduce roadway fatalities and serious injuries.⁷ Additionally, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has opportunities to strengthen its Special Crash Investigations Program by improving data collection procedures to support critical vehicle safety improvements.⁸ Moreover, DOT can advance oversight of Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program grantees by holding States accountable for prioritizing Commercial Vehicle Safety Plan goals and improving performance tracking.⁹ Also, given the importance of verifying that only qualified drivers have commercial driver's licenses (CDLs), we are currently conducting an audit of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) oversight of States' CDL program compliance with CDL knowledge and skills tests regulatory requirements.

Likewise, we have reported¹⁰ that though the safety of our Nation's rails remains the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) top priority, the Agency should continue to prioritize safety improvements. FRA's hours-of-service, fatigue management, and roadway worker protection regulations aim to ensure rail workers have the rest and track protection needed to operate safely. However, despite recent improvements, human factor-caused train accidents and the rate of train accidents per million train miles have increased overall since 2016.

⁷ *DOT's National Roadway Safety Strategy Targeted Factors Contributing to Fatalities, but DOT Can Improve How It Measures Success* (OIG Report No. ST2026002), December 9, 2025.

⁸ *NHTSA's Special Crash Investigations Program Lacked Adequate Procedures in Key Program Areas* (OIG Report No. ST2025035), July 9, 2025.

⁹ *FMCSA's Procedures To Oversee IJIA-Funded Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program Grants Are Insufficient* (OIG Report No. ST2025028), April 23, 2025.

¹⁰ *FRA Lacks Written Procedures and Formal Planning for Oversight of Railroad Hours of Service Compliance and the Passenger Railroad Fatigue Management Requirements* (OIG Report No. ST2024020), March 27, 2024.

Accordingly, we recommended FRA effectively target its limited resources at ensuring railroads comply with safety requirements.

In addition, DOT faces challenges overseeing the implementation of its transportation worker and traveler protection safety priorities.¹¹ For example, one initiative to support commercial drivers includes expanding safe truck parking. DOT must evaluate States' Freight Plans to ensure they meet requirements and oversee related grant funds to ensure States use the money appropriately. Also, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) plays a significant role in promoting safety at rail transit systems through its State Safety Oversight program and oversight of the Nation's State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs). Our August 2025 report¹² recommended DOT strengthen transit safety by improving FTA's SSOA oversight through enhanced communication, quality control, and data management.

Focusing Oversight To Curb Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

DOT's efforts to deliver a safe, efficient, and reliable transportation system depend on strong financial stewardship and targeted oversight to curb fraud, waste, and abuse. Our work has highlighted the importance of assessing and addressing risks related to the Department's multibillion-dollar surface infrastructure investments, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of its grant and contract processes and oversight, strengthening adherence to financial management requirements, and holding those who abuse the transportation system accountable.

Improving Stewardship of Infrastructure Investments To Assess and Address Risks

DOT oversees billions of dollars in surface infrastructure investments that support the construction and maintenance of road, bridge, rail, transit, port, and other projects and programs. However, DOT faces challenges in assessing the risks associated with these investments as it strives to direct funds to the Nation's highest priority infrastructure needs. For example, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) reviews and approves State DOTs' Statewide

¹¹ *FRA Needs To Improve Its Inspection and Data Collection Processes To Effectively Oversee Compliance With the Roadway Worker Protection Regulation* (OIG Report No. ST2025029), May 14, 2025.

¹² *FTA's Oversight of State Safety Oversight Agencies Could Be Enhanced Through Communication, Audit Process, and Data Management Improvements* (OIG Report No. ST2025039), August 13, 2025.

Transportation Improvement Programs (STIPs) to ensure States properly use and budget Federal funds. In 2024,¹³ we recommended FHWA improve its oversight of STIPs that include projects funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).¹⁴

Furthermore, as DOT is now in the final year of IIJA's 5-year funding authorization, timely obligation and disbursement of funds is vital to meet the Department's goals. As of November 2025, DOT had obligated 70 percent and disbursed 41 percent of the approximately \$533.8 billion in total available IIJA funding. Of particular note, the Maritime Administration's Port Infrastructure Development Program, which received \$2.25 billion in total IIJA funding, has obligated approximately 18 percent and disbursed 2 percent of its available funding.

Moreover, strong oversight remains necessary for DOT to achieve intended outcomes and address risks in its infrastructure investments. For example, in 2025, DOT recently reported that the Nation's public transportation systems had a combined state of good repair backlog of over \$140 billion.¹⁵ However, when awarding grants to expand transit systems, FTA did not verify funding applicants' self-reported progress toward meeting performance targets for improving their systems' state of good repair—which may increase the risk of FTA awarding funds to recipients that have not actually demonstrated progress in addressing the backlog. Meanwhile, when assessing FHWA's oversight of Federal-aid highway projects,¹⁶ we found the Agency could not demonstrate it met requirements to fully approve quality assurance programs, which aim to ensure the quality of construction materials and workmanship. Further, FHWA's reviews did not fully address all regulatory requirements or reduce the risk of fraud.

Enhancing Efficiency and Effectiveness of Grant and Contract Processes and Oversight

In fiscal year 2025, DOT obligated over \$140 billion in grant and contract funds—a 16-percent increase from the previous year. Given the magnitude of grant and contract fund expenditures, it is essential the Department establishes informed,

¹³ *Opportunities Exist To Improve FHWA's Oversight of STIPs Including Those With IIJA-Funded Projects* (OIG Report No. ST2024021), April 1, 2024.

¹⁴ Pub. L. No. 117-58 (2021).

¹⁵ *FTA Did Not Verify Transit Asset Management Performance Target Progress Prior to Awarding Capital Investment Grants* (OIG Report No. ST2026005), December 17, 2025.

¹⁶ *FHWA Lacks Adequate Guidance and Procedures for Its Oversight of Construction Quality Assurance* (OIG Report No. ST2025022), February 18, 2025.

proactive, and risk-based monitoring and oversight throughout the entire grant and contract lifecycles.

However, our work has identified weaknesses in DOT's grant and contract fund oversight, such as insufficient guidance, limited oversight reviews, reliance on self-certifications, and inadequate monitoring of inactive funds. These weaknesses expose DOT to risks such as improper payments, questioned costs, and other forms of noncompliance. For example, we reported that FHWA's oversight reviews did not consistently address recipients' compliance with Buy America requirements.¹⁷ As a result, we identified over \$750,000 in questioned costs based on material of unknown origin from just three Federal-aid projects.

Moreover, the Administration has committed to streamlining Federal regulations affecting grant and contract processes to help maximize value and efficiency. As these changes occur, DOT will face challenges aligning its own internal policies with these changes and verifying staff adopt the new practices. Our past work has identified weaknesses throughout DOT's grant and contract practices that may be affected. These areas include determining reasonable pricing; considering competition, including only applicable funding provisions and award terms; and evaluating applicant qualifications and proposed project plans fairly and transparently. DOT's ability to apply streamlined procedures, innovation, and sound business judgment will be critical to achieving efficient and successful outcomes.

Strengthening Adherence to Financial Management Requirements

Oversight is also vital to ensuring DOT adheres to financial management requirements in areas ranging from annual financial reporting to mandatory single audits. For example, DOT recently responded to several of our recommendations by issuing Single Audit Guidance to standardize how the Department manages single audits and ensures organizational compliance with Federal requirements.¹⁸ However, our work has shown the Department has not resolved DOT-funded programs' single audit report findings in a timely manner, especially as numerous findings repeat year after year. Resolving single audit findings includes determining the allowability of millions of dollars in associated questioned costs. For fiscal year 2025, the single audit threshold for non-Federal entities receiving Federal awards increased from \$750,000 to \$1 million, which generally exempted more entities from single audits. While the increased

¹⁷ *FHWA Can Strengthen Oversight and Provide Additional Guidance To Improve Federal-aid Recipients' Buy America Compliance* (OIG Report No. F12025037), July 28, 2025.

¹⁸ *DOT Does Not Ensure Compliance With All Single Audit Provisions of OMB's Uniform Guidance* (OIG Report No. FS2022024), March 23, 2022.

threshold allows DOT to focus its oversight on larger entities, the Department remains responsible for overseeing all non-Federal entities receiving DOT funds.

Holding Those Who Abuse the Transportation System Accountable

To protect the billions of taxpayer dollars directed to our Nation's transportation system and the safety of the traveling public, it is vital DOT identify and prevent any associated fraud, waste, and abuse. Curbing these issues depends on increasing oversight and holding those who abuse the system accountable. Our investigations safeguard Federal transportation dollars, investments, and programs by addressing fraud in a wide range of areas. These areas include theft, misuse of funds, Buy America violations, embezzlement, false claims, kickbacks, overbilling, and bid rigging. For example, an investigation resulted in a Minnesota asphalt contractor agreeing to pay nearly \$1.3 million to settle claims of submitting falsified paving material test results to receive financial incentives and avoid deductions for lower-quality material, resulting in unearned payments.

In addition, we investigate numerous cases where bribery plays a central role in enabling fraud. In Philadelphia, a former senior executive of a contractor conspired to bribe an Amtrak employee with over \$323,000 in cash and gifts to secure favorable contract changes on the 30th Street Station project. The scheme led to Amtrak being overbilled by more than \$2 million. The former executive was sentenced to nearly 5 years in prison and more than \$2 million in restitution.

Bribery schemes also appear in vehicle licensing and certification processes. These schemes put the public at risk when gatekeepers accept bribes in exchange for scores that allow unqualified persons to operate vehicles. For example, a former Massachusetts State Police sergeant was convicted on multiple counts for giving false passing scores to at least three dozen CDL applicants—some of whom failed or never took the test. In return, the former sergeant accepted bribes, among which was a driveway worth over \$10,000 and a snowblower valued at nearly \$2,000.

To its credit, the Department has strengthened its approach to managing fraud risks in response to our June 2023 recommendation¹⁹ related to IIJA oversight by issuing a DOT Order on identifying, evaluating, preventing, detecting, monitoring, and reporting fraud. Nevertheless, raising overall awareness of common fraud schemes—such as our office's outreach efforts—will remain a critical component of reducing fraud in the Department's programs.

¹⁹ *DOT Should Enhance Its Fraud Risk Assessment Processes for IIJA-Funded Surface Transportation Programs* (OIG Report No. ST2023034), June 20, 2023.

Advancing Modernization and Transportation Innovation

DOT is committed to advancing initiatives to meet present demands and prepare for the future by modernizing the Nation's transportation system. Our work has focused on critical oversight areas such as FAA's large-scale airspace modernization efforts, safe integration of new technologies into the NAS, and the Department's progress implementing vehicle automation and driver assistance technologies. Addressing new and longstanding cybersecurity challenges is also vital to safeguarding the resiliency and security of our transportation system.

Overseeing Large-Scale Airspace Modernization Efforts

Our body of work and recent events have highlighted FAA's challenges modernizing and sustaining the integrity of our Nation's aging air traffic infrastructure. For instance, in April and May 2025, air traffic controllers managing Newark's airspace experienced high-profile outages due to primary and redundant communication infrastructure failures. DOT recently unveiled plans to build a Brand New Air Traffic Control System (BNATCS)—a multiyear initiative that would require total funding of \$31.5 billion through 2028. To date, FAA has received \$12.5 billion for BNATCS under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.²⁰ The initiative includes goals such as replacing aging radars, consolidating air traffic facilities, and completing implementation of ongoing modernization programs. This investment plan comes as FAA terminates the Office of the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen), which oversaw the Agency's prior multidecade, multibillion-dollar modernization efforts. Our work,²¹ over more than 2 decades and across 50 audit reports, has highlighted issues with NextGen's implementation that led to cost increases, schedule overruns, and delayed or reduced benefits and capabilities. The underlying causes of FAA's NextGen difficulties included the Agency's lack of an executable plan and unresolved critical design decisions regarding implementation costs and how technologies would be developed or integrated.

While DOT has provided a high-level overview of its proposed BNATCS actions, FAA has yet to unveil a comprehensive plan that anticipates and mitigates implementation challenges. Such a plan should include addressing the potential

²⁰ Pub. L. No. 119-21 (2025).

²¹ *Capstone Memorandum: Observations and Lessons Learned From OIG Reviews of the Next Generation Air Transportation System* (OIG Correspondence No. CC2025010), September 29, 2025.

impact of external factors beyond the Agency's control such as inflation and supply chain disruptions. As we recently reported,²² external factors contributed to cost increases and schedule delays in deploying FAA's Terminal Flight Data Manager (TFDM) system, an automation tool that introduces electronic flight strips and surface management tools. As FAA works to plan and implement BNATCS, leveraging lessons learned from NextGen can help the Agency set stakeholder expectations, secure industry investment, and continue to make progress in improving the efficiency of the NAS.

Safely Integrating New Technologies Into the NAS

FAA plays a vital role in balancing safety, innovation, and operational efficiency as new technologies advance in the NAS. For instance, commercial space operations continue to grow rapidly. FAA reported 204 licensed commercial space operations in fiscal year 2025, representing more than 500 percent growth since 2020. FAA estimates that such operations could increase anywhere from 46 to 152 percent between fiscal years 2026 and 2034. These operations encompass activities such as satellite deployment and replacement, space tourism, and lunar and Mars exploration missions. Our work²³ has shown FAA must ensure it has the resources to effectively integrate these activities into the NAS. Key priorities include licensing and overseeing the industry and determining the appropriate level of industry regulation, as well as developing technologies and procedures that improve safety and airspace efficiency for all airspace operators and the public.

In addition, our audit and investigative work has demonstrated FAA's challenges advancing the safe integration of unmanned aircraft systems, also known as drones. For example, as drone use has increased across the NAS, FAA reported approximately 93 drone notifications in the month of January 2026 alone. These notifications include incidents where aircraft had to take evasive action to avoid drones. The importance of drone safety oversight is underscored by our investigations, which included charging a California individual who unlawfully operated a drone that collided with a firefighting aircraft responding to the Palisades wildfire, leaving a football-sized hole in the aircraft's wing and grounding it for days.

²² *FAA Can Improve the Reliability of Overall Benefit and Cost Projections for NextGen by Fully Assessing the Impact of External Factors* (OIG Report No. AV2025036), July 23, 2025.

²³ *FAA Has Deployed a Prototype System for Monitoring Commercial Space Operations but Faces Integration Challenges* (OIG Report No. AV2023036), June 21, 2023.

As we have reported,²⁴ a key focus area is FAA’s safe integration of routine and scalable beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) drone operations. To that end, both the President and Congress mandated FAA issue a rulemaking that provides a regulatory pathway for BVLOS drones. To encourage collaboration between government and industry to inform current and future drone regulations, FAA has established partnership programs such as BEYOND. However, we recently reported that although FAA approved increasingly complex drone operations, most BEYOND participants did not meet operational performance metrics. Moreover, we found FAA is not using comprehensive data from across the Agency to inform rulemaking, and FAA’s data validation process can lead to errors. Enhanced program targets and data sharing can help FAA in its efforts to lead the way regarding drone operations and reshape the future of aviation.

Evaluating Progress in Implementing Vehicle Automation and Driver Assistance Technologies

DOT is also working to advance and oversee the integration of new vehicle technologies, including capitalizing on the safety benefits of vehicle automation systems, which can reduce the chance of human error-related crashes. For example, these systems’ electronic sensors can automatically stop a vehicle or keep it in a lane. We reported²⁵ that DOT must overcome challenges identifying and assessing safety impacts in the evolving landscape of these systems and technologies. Of note, to expand consumer access to these systems and accelerate automated vehicle development, the Department announced the Automated Vehicle Framework in 2025. The framework relies on DOT’s Standing General Order that allows NHTSA to collect data on real-world crashes associated with automated driving systems and driver assistance technologies. The Department can leverage this data to help identify safety concerns, develop risk models to ensure unsafe vehicles are removed from public roads, and remedy safety defects as appropriate.

Addressing New and Longstanding Cybersecurity Challenges

In today’s rapidly evolving cybersecurity landscape, which includes the wide proliferation of artificial intelligence technologies, DOT must address new and

²⁴ *FAA Has Made Progress in Advancing BVLOS Drone Operations but Can Do More To Achieve Program Goals and Improve Data Analysis* (OIG Report No. AV2025034), June 30, 2025.

²⁵ *DOT’s Fiscal Year 2026 Top Management Challenges* (OIG Report No. 25P9001P000), January 6, 2026.

longstanding weaknesses that pose significant risks to the Department’s critical information systems. Despite DOT’s progress in closing 12 of 57 prior-year audit recommendations related to the Federal Information Security Modernization Act²⁶ (FISMA) compliance in fiscal year 2025, DOT’s systems continue to have critical and high-risk vulnerabilities in areas such as patch management, configuration management, weak passwords, and unsupported software. For example, our fiscal year 2025 FISMA audit²⁷ reported exploitable vulnerabilities that allowed testers to gain unauthorized access to administrator accounts and system resources. As of June 2025, DOT had a cumulative backlog of 15,038 open weaknesses in its Plans of Action and Milestones. These issues are, in part, a result of DOT’s inconsistent enforcement of its Agencywide information security program, ineffective communication between the Department and the Operating Administrations, and limited progress in the remediation of prior-year audit recommendations.

Moreover, penetration testing during our audits conducted between 2016 and 2025 identified and exploited numerous weaknesses across Operating Administrations and IT infrastructure, including unaddressed vulnerabilities from our previous audits.²⁸ We also found widespread misconfigurations in DOT’s IT systems and network devices.²⁹ To effectively safeguard its systems, DOT must strengthen enforcement of existing cybersecurity policies and adhere to the DOT Cybersecurity Compendium and National Institute of Standards and Technology guidelines. This includes following internal procedures such as audit log retention and incident response handling. Failure to implement and enforce these practices increases the risk of data breaches and limits DOT’s ability to detect and respond to cyber threats in a timely manner.

Conclusion

The Nation’s transportation system is essential to our daily lives, supports our national security, and is vital to our economic progress. While DOT has continued to prioritize transportation safety and leveraged its investments to maintain and modernize our transportation infrastructure, our work continues to identify critical opportunities to optimize and enhance the Department’s oversight.

²⁶ Pub. L. No 113-283 (2014) (codified at 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, Subchapter II).

²⁷ *Quality Control Review of the Independent Auditor’s Report on the Assessment of DOT’s Information Security Program and Practices* (OIG Report No. QC2025049), September 30, 2025.

²⁸ See for example *DOT Needs To Increase Adherence to Cybersecurity Policies To Protect FHWA’s IT Infrastructure From the Risk of Further Compromise* (OIG Report No. IT2025012), November 25, 2024.

²⁹ *DOT Uses Continuous Monitoring Tools To Automate Cybersecurity Monitoring But Needs To More Effectively Detect, Prevent, and Report Cybersecurity Threats* (OIG Report No. IT2024041), September 30, 2024.

As always, we remain committed to supporting DOT's efforts to strengthen safety, enhance efficiency, and prepare for the future of transportation. We appreciate the Department's continued dedication to promptly responding to our recommendations and addressing the improvements we have identified.

This concludes my prepared statement. I appreciate this Subcommittee's continued interest in our mission and work and will be happy to answer any questions you or other Members of the Subcommittee may have.

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1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590
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