SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Full Committee
Nomination Hearing
Tuesday, November 10, 2026, at 10:30 A.M.

DEMOCRATIC QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

Leslie Becera

COVER PAGE

RANKING MEMBER MARIA CANTWELL (D-WA)

I-5 Bridge. The I-5 bridge is a critical project not only regionally, but to the national economy. $48 billion in American-made and grown goods cross the bridge each year. A new bridge will help improve freight efficiency not only along the I-5 corridor, but also in and out of the Ports of Vancouver and Portland, which export products from around the country including grain from Montana, Idaho, North Dakota, and South Dakota. The bridge's national impact is why it is not only supported by the local community, but also national business groups like the American Trucking Association.

This multimodal project has already been approved in the project's Record of Decision, and it has received $2.1 billion in federal commitments.

Question 1: Do you support the swift obligation of the remaining balances of the Bridge Investment Program and MEGA grants for the project as approved in the Record of Decision to keep the I-5 bridge on schedule?

Answer: It is my hope that DOT will be able to obligate the remainder of these grants soon, and we are working towards that goal.

Question 2: Please provide a schedule of anticipated obligations dates for the remaining funds.

Answer: The obligation schedule of the BIP and Mega grants will depend on the project sponsor completing design work and, in the latter case, completion of CIG evaluation.

Question 3: You previously committed to setting up a briefing with my staff on the BIP and MEGA grant agreements for the I-5 bridge. This briefing has yet to occur. Please explain the delay in scheduling and provide a specific date for the briefing.

Answer: As information becomes available, I commit to continuing to work with your office to provide updates on the obligation status for the I-5 bridge project.

Question 4: Will you commit to communicating regularly with updates on this project going forward?

Answer: Yes.

DOT Grants. On August 7, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order (EO) 14332, titled "Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking." The EO directs each agency head to designate a non-career, political "senior appointee" appointed by the President responsible for creating a new process "to review discretionary grants to ensure that they are consistent with agency priorities" and that "discretionary awards must, where applicable, demonstrably advance the President's policy priorities."

Question 1: Do you support the requirement in EO 14332 that a senior political appointee approve every individual discretionary grant before money is distributed?

Answer: I support the President's policy priorities and DOT is committed to following the law, both generally and with respect to our administration of grant programs.

Question 2: Do you agree that DOT discretionary grants must "demonstrably advance the President's policy priorities" and that it is appropriate to cancel or delay grants if a particular grant does not?

Answer: In supporting the President's policy priorities, DOT is committed to following the law, both generally and with respect to our administration of grant programs.

The Trump Administration and its Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has targeted cancelling grants in multiple blue states. For example, in February 2026 OMB directed DOT to rescind $943 million from Colorado, Illinois, California, and Minnesota, mostly for electric vehicle chargers and other "green" projects. In a July 15, 2026, court document, federal officials admitted decisions were made "based solely on the political identity of the grant recipient's state, i.e. whether the recipient's location and/or place of performance was in a Blue State or a non-Blue State."

Question 3: Do you believe it is ever appropriate to consider the political identity of a grant recipient's state in DOT's discretionary grant process?

Answer: It is not appropriate to base discretionary grant decisions on partisan political affiliation.

Question 4: Will you commit to notifying Congress immediately if DOT makes a grant decision "based solely" on whether a grant recipient is in a "Blue State or a non-Blue State"?

Answer: I commit to following the law.

My office has received two different lists of grants that were under Department of Transportation (DOT) review at the time the lists were provided. Authorizers and appropriators have also been sent lists of awarded, canceled, or withdrawn grants at particularly points in time. However, none of these captures the full universe of DOT grants that have been awarded but not obligated. That universe would include the outcomes of all DOT grants that were awarded but not obligated as of January 20, 2025.

Question 5: Please provide a comprehensive list of all 3,200 grants that were unobligated as of January 20, 2025, and the status of each – partially obligated, fully obligated, canceled, withdrawn, lapsed, or still under review.

Answer: The Biden administration backlog of announced but unobligated grant selections totaled 3,382 selections on January 20, 2025. As of the end of Fiscal Year 2026 (September 30), the Department's record of the Biden administration backlog of announced but unobligated grant selections totaled 3,382 selections on January 20, 2025:

- 3,040 or 90 percent of selections were approved to proceed to obligation;
- 98 selections were discontinued by the recipient;
- 81 selections had funding rescinded under Public Law 119-21;
- 46 selections were discontinued by DOT; and
- 117 selections are pending a decision.

Future reporting will include changes in status for the following grants since September 30:

- FRA, Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grants (CRISI), CA, Napa Valley Railroad, FY2022, California Napa Valley Railroad Locomotive Emissions Improvement Project
  Review-status change: Discontinued by Recipient
  Note: This grant was discontinued by the recipient in May 2024 and therefore should not previously have been included in the category of announced-but-not-obligated grants.

- FRA, Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grants (NEC), PA, SEPTA, FY2024, SEPTA Regional Rail Master Plan Implementation
  Review-status change: Approved
  Note: This grant received approval to proceed to obligation in October 2026.

These grants were reviewed by DOT concurrently with announced-but not-obligated grants, but were themselves fully obligated and therefore should not previously have been included in the category of announced-but-not-obligated grants:

- OST-R, University Transportation Centers, CA, University of California-Davis, FY2022-FY2026, National Center for Sustainable Transportation
  Review status: Approved
- OST-R, University Transportation Centers, CA, University of Southern CA, FY2022-FY2026, Pacific Southwest Region University Transportation Center
  Review status: Approved
- OST-R, University Transportation Centers, CA, San Jose State University, FY2022-FY2026, Mineta Consortium for Emerging, Efficient, and Safe Transportation
  Review status: Terminated or Rescinded by DOT
- OST-R, University Transportation Centers, LA, University of New Orleans, FY2022-FY2026, Center for Transit Oriented Communities
  Review status: Terminated or Rescinded by DOT
- OST-R, University Transportation Centers, MD, John Hopkins University, FY2022-FY2026, Center for Smart Transportation
  Review status: Terminated or Rescinded by DOT
- OST-R, University Transportation Centers, NY, City College of New York, FY2022-FY2026, Center for Social and Economic Mobility for People and Communities through Transportation
  Review status: Terminated or Rescinded by DOT
- OST-R, University Transportation Centers, NY, New York University, FY2022-FY2026, Connected Communities for Smart Mobility Toward Accessible and Resilient Transportation for Equitably Reducing Congestion
  Review status: Terminated or Rescinded by DOT

Please see attached spreadsheet for comprehensive list (Cantwell Grants Q5 + Q7 Not-Obligated Grants Reviewed (Nov. 2026)).

Question 6: Were you part of any discussions or decisions for any of the grants on this list? If so, please describe the specific grants, nature, content, and outcome of those discussions.

Answer: Discussions regarding grants are a routine part of the Department's performance of its mission, and I have been present during such discussions. My duties at the Department have not involved selecting grant recipients.

Question 7: On January 26, 2026, we received a list of 421 grants under review as part of the Questions for the Record for DOT Under Secretary for Policy Ryan McCormack. On November 9, 2026, we received a list of 117 grants under review as part of the requests for your nomination. The November 9th list appears to be a subset of the January 26th list, with all but one grant on the January 26th list. Please reconcile the two lists by providing the status of each of the grants on the January 26th list—partially obligated, fully obligated, withdrawn, lapsed, or still under review.

Answer: From January 26 to November 9 most of the grants under review were approved to proceed to obligation. Please see attached spreadsheet(Cantwell Grants Q5 + Q7 Not-Obligated Grants Reviewed (Nov. 2026)).

Question 8: Please provide a schedule of anticipated obligations dates for the remaining grants "under review."

Answer: DOT is still reviewing the 117 remaining grants and will communicate to the recipient once a decision is made on a selection.

Pedestrian fatalities: On November 10, 2026, NHTSA announced that U.S. traffic deaths had fallen in the first half of 2026 to the lowest rate since 2014. However, the announcement did not mention pedestrians or other vulnerable road users. The most recent NHTSA data—from 2024—shows that 7,080 pedestrians were killed that year, constituting a larger percentage of total fatalities than in previous years. Despite this trend, the Trump Administration has canceled grants for projects designed to improve pedestrian safety, and deemphasized road design changes that can improve safety for families walking and biking.

Question 1: Do you support the Administration's decision to cancel grants for projects designed to improve pedestrian safety?

Answer: DOT is committed to roadway safety and reducing traffic fatalities, including pedestrian deaths. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's most recent Fatality Analysis Reporting System data indicates a 6.7% decrease in 2025 traffic fatalities compared to 2024, with fatalities decreasing across 39 States including Washington State. This Administration has funded hundreds of projects that will improve pedestrian safety, including over $1 billion in roadway safety investments announced as part of the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program on October 29, 2026.

Question 2: What steps is DOT taking to prioritize pedestrian safety? Is it considering researching and funding all available countermeasures that can improve safety for Americans walking and biking, including road design changes? Why or why not?

Answer: On August 5, 2026, DOT released the National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS), which is a new plan to reduce traffic fatalities and injuries on our Nation's roadways. The NRSS is focused on safer people, safer roads, and safer vehicles, and contains activities that will save lives, including the lives of pedestrians and bicyclists. Notable activities include the NHTSA Pathways to Safer Streets initiative, promoting design that makes roads safer through the FHWA SAFE ROADS initiative, and accelerating the deployment of proven safety technologies used in motor vehicles.

Question 3: Will you ensure NHTSA will communicate more timely information on pedestrian injuries and fatalities so that solutions can be implemented as soon as possible?

Answer: Yes.

FMCSA Crash Data. On July 29, 2026, Senator Markey and I sent a letter to FMCSA following a ProPublica and WBUR investigation found that FMCSA was missing critical crash data for a company that operates school buses. This raised serious concerns that FMCSA may be undercounting crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving these and other large trucks and buses, thus jeopardizing its mission to reduce such incidents and protect the safety of Americans. To better understand how FMCSA is addressing limitations of its crash data and keeping the traveling public safe, Senator Markey and I requested key information from FMCSA. FMCSA's response—sent October 22, 2026—failed to answer most of our questions, including our request to provide evidence to demonstrate how FMCSA verifies the accuracy and completeness of crash records.

Question 1: What is FMCSA currently doing to address gaps in its crash data that ProPublica, WBUR, Senator Markey, and I highlighted?
Anwer: I understand there are some jurisdictional issues and exemptions that limit the data collected by FMCSA, particularly for school buses and transit. For instance, there is a school-to-home and home-to-school exemption for school buses. That said, in cases where FMCSA has jurisdiction and an interstate carrier's crash was not properly assigned to a particular carrier, FMCSA commits to continuing to improve its data collection, as data quality is imperative to its safety mission. As much of FMCSA's data comes from State law enforcement, the agency is taking the steps in Question 2 to address inspection and crash data and guidance. In addition, FMCSA will be hosting a Tech Summit to achieve further improvements in the quality and type of data entering MCMIS to ensure that we are making safety decisions based on sound data.

Question 2: What steps has FMCSA taken to clarify to law enforcement that, when completing a required crash report to FMCSA, they should record the private contractor operating the school bus for the school district?
Answer: FMCSA hosts an annual Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) planning meeting for all State CMV safety lead agencies. For the 2027 Meeting (impacting the FY 2028 grant award), FMCSA will present on crash reporting accuracy and hold a question-and-answer session on the importance of proper carrier identification and operation classification when completing crash reports. DOT plans to add appropriate language in the 2028 MCSAP Planning Memo.

As it relates specifically to Massachusetts State Police, FMCSA's Division Offices have been in contact. In December, MSP is hosting a Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Training (CVET) where MSP and Municipal Officers will learn various CMV enforcement topics, including CMV crash investigation and proper documentation of the responsible motor carrier. In addition, at the beginning of the year, the Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC) is hosting a "School Bus Enforcement Training" available for all police officers.

CIG grant scoring: Although multiple projects are eligible to advance through the program, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has approved only one Capital Investment Grant (CIG) since January 2025. In October 2026, the FTA proposed policy guidance (docket FTA-2026-0331) that would change how projects are rated and funded, such as adding birth and marriage rates. Public comment from the Urban Institute noted that the proposed guidance will result in project delays or cancellations.

Question 1: Analysis in public comments suggest FTA proposed policy guidance would reduce federal funding for projects in areas with high potential transit use. Did the FTA analyze these effects before proposing the changes? If so, please provide that analysis. If not, why not?
Answer: The Department's proposed changes to CIG policy guidance aim to provide greater transparency and accountability to the CIG program. The public comment period for the new policy guidance closed on November 16, 2026. FTA is closely reviewing all public comments as it considers changes to the final guidance. I commit to working with you to provide updates on the status of the policy guidance as it is finalized.

Question 2: Public comments estimate that some projects in Project Development could see their federal share fall from roughly 49 percent to 21 percent. How will FTA help sponsors of projects in Project Development who have planned for years around expected federal funding, move towards completing their projects?
Answer: FTA assembles a multi-office team for each project in the CIG pipeline for the purpose of advising the project sponsor through the program, including funding uncertainties, and will continue this practice.

Question 3: What studies, data, or analysis did FTA use to justify adding birth and marriage rates as adjustment factors in the CIG rule?
Answer: FTA proposed criteria for projects to qualify for a potential increase in the Federal CIG share pursuant to DOT Order 2100.7: Ensuring Reliance Upon Sound Economic Analysis in Department of Transportation Policies, Programs, and Activities.

Question 4: What evidence does FTA have that adding birth and marriage rates as adjustment factors will increase transit ridership or the effectiveness of CIG investments? Does FTA plan to evaluate the effect of these factors after implementation, and if so, how?
Answer: FTA proposed criteria for projects to qualify for a potential increase in the Federal CIG share per direction in DOT Order 2100.7: Ensuring Reliance Upon Sound Economic Analysis in Department of Transportation Policies, Programs, and Activities." Pursuant to the requirements of 49 U.S.C. §§5309(k)(2)(E) and (o)(2), FTA will support GAO's biennial reviews of 1) the CIG program's processes and procedures and FTA's implementation of those processes and

procedures, and 2) projects that have entered revenue service since the last review to compare the predicted vs. actual services and ridership.

Question 5: What information or analysis did FTA consider on the cost to state and local governments of requiring projects that have already received a CIG rating to be required to receive a new rating under the new criteria?
Answer: Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 5309(g)(1), all New Starts and Core Capacity projects must be rated twice: prior to entry into Engineering, and prior to receipt of a construction grant. It is not uncommon for a project to receive a different rating when ready for a construction grant either from changes to the project or CIG program.

Question 6: To what extent did FTA consider the sunk costs to state and local governments for projects that will no longer advance through the CIG program?
Answer: Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. §§ 5309(b) and (c), all projects that enter the CIG program must satisfy the statutory requirements to be considered for a construction grant. All project sponsors bear financial risk while performing work during the CIG process because there is no statutory guarantee that all projects in the pipeline will receive a construction grant.

PROTECT grants: Last year, DOT allowed over $275 million in fiscal year 2022 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost Saving Transportation (PROTECT) grant funding to lapse, which means the Department no longer has enough funding to complete 15 previously awarded grants in 11 states and one territory. This includes a $24.5 million grant for the Wapato Creek Connect project in Washington state. I understand that DOT has PROTECT grant funding available that could be used to support these now stalled projects while still making new grant awards. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued for the PROTECT grant program on August 28, 2026, states that "FHWA may elect to utilize funds from this NOFO for projects selected to receive an award under the previous PROTECT Competitive Grant Program NOFO."

Question 1: How much PROTECT grant funding does the Department have available? Please provide an exact number.
Answer: Up to $787,000,000 is available in the FY24-26 PROTECT Competitive Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The FY23 PROTECT Competitive Grant Program funding remaining, as of October 13, 2026, is $11,248,878.40 for Resilience Improvement Grants and $7,968,400 for At-Risk Coastal Infrastructure Grants.

Question 2: Is the amount of available PROTECT grant funding sufficient to complete all 15 previously awarded grants?
Answer: The amount of FY23 funding remaining is not sufficient to fund the remaining 15 projects previously selected for award.

Question 3: Has the Department made a decision on using available PROTECT grant funding for the 15 previously awarded grants? If not, when will the Department make such a decision? Will you commit to communicating these decisions with Members of Congress before the decisions are finalized?

Answer: The Department is working to obligate available funding under the PROTECT program, and we commit to informing Congress as decisions are made.

Question 4: What assistance is the Department providing to the cities, counties, ports, state departments of transportation, and Tribes impacted by the lapse in FY22 PROTECT grant funding as they seek to continue to move their respective projects forward?
Answer: We are working with project sponsors to assist them in navigating the grant process.

DOT Aviation Workforce Development Grants. Our aviation system relies on strong workforce from every background and education level. The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 required the FAA to award grants to develop the pilot, maintenance technician, and manufacturing workforce. However, despite congress providing $10 million for the manufacturing program in Fiscal Year 2026, the program has not yet been established.

Question 1: Why have these grants not been executed?
Answer: The Department understands the importance of these grants and expects to announce an award package soon.

Question 2: Will you commit to working with the Committee to ensure the FAA executes these grants and fulfil congress's intent to invest in American manufacturing jobs?
Answer: Yes.

SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR (D-MN)

In your testimony, you discussed accelerating project delivery and ensuring timely responses to this committee's inquiries. I remain concerned about delays in finalizing grant agreements for already-awarded grants.

- Do you commit to providing Congress with a status update on all pending DOT grant awards and grant agreements upon confirmation?
  Answer: Yes.

The 2024 FAA Reauthorization included my bill to boost the FAA's Section 625 Aviation Workforce Development Grant Program including by adding aviation manufacturing grants.

- If confirmed, do you commit to providing an update on the agency's implementation of these provisions including a timeline for when the aviation manufacturing workforce development grants will be available?
  Answer: Yes.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation has waited over a year for the DOT to approve an updated grant agreement for the 2022 BUILD (formerly RAISE) grant to improve Highway 197 in Bemidji, Minnesota.

- Do you commit to working with my office and the Minnesota Department of Transportation to facilitate a timely resolution of this grant agreement and future grant agreements?
  Answer: Yes.

SENATOR EDWARD MARKEY (D-MA)

CIG Program

The Federal Transit Administration and DOT have proposed to radically change the policy guidance for the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program. FTA/DOT's proposal could make many CIG projects ineligible for a grant, and the proposal could severely reduce the amount of CIG funding provided to some projects, which could also result in projects being canceled or delays. In announcing the proposed policy guidance DOT/FTA said, "no grandfathering will be allowed for any projects currently in the CIG pipeline."

1. Will projects currently in the CIG project pipeline become ineligible if DOT/FTA's proposed CIG policy guidance is adopted? Yes or no?
   Answer: Projects that receive an overall rating of "medium" or higher qualify for CIG funding, whereas projects with a rating below "medium" are statutorily ineligible.

2. Upon adoption of final guidance, if FTA or DOT believe that a project's rating has changed and a project no longer qualifies for CIG assistance, will you commit to being transparent and communicating to affected project sponsors that their project is no longer eligible under the CIG program? Yes or no?
   Answer: FTA conducts an objective review of the current information and data submitted by the project sponsor to determine the project's rating. FTA teams provide guidance to the project sponsors prior to their submittals but do not provide anticipatory analyses or rating reviews prior to official submittals.

3. Why has FTA refused to state how the proposed guidance will change the rating of projects currently in the CIG pipeline?
   Answer: The proposed guidance was available for public comment until November 16, 2026. FTA is now reviewing all comments publicly posted in the docket. I commit to working with you to provide updates on the status of the policy guidance as it is finalized.

4. Will the proposed CIG policy guidance result in some projects receiving a CIG share of projects costs less than 40 percent? Yes or no?
   Answer: The CIG share will be dependent on a project's Project Justification ratings.

5. Does a reduction in CIG funds for projects in the CIG pipeline hinder the advancement of projects toward a CIG grant agreement? Yes or no?
   Answer: The amount of CIG funding that FTA establishes at entry into Engineering does not prevent a project from continuing to progress through the program.

6. Do you believe that FTA and DOT should change CIG program rules and make projects ineligible after projects sponsors have spent millions of dollars of state and local taxpayer funds to design and develop project applications? Yes or no?
   Answer: DOT is committed to following the law, both generally and with respect to our administration of grant programs. FTA is required by statute to update the CIG Policy Guidance no less than every two years.

7. Will FTA and DOT reconsider the position that no projects currently in the CIG pipeline will be grandfathered under the current program rules that were adopted under the Trump Administration last year?
   Answer: The public comment period for the new policy guidance closed on November 16, 2026. FTA is now reviewing all comments publicly posted in the docket. I commit to working with you to provide updates on the status of the policy guidance as it is finalized.

SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH (D-IL)

Secretary Duffy's "Great American Road Trip"

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has said career ethics officials cleared every aspect of Secretary Duffy's participation in the Great American Road Trip, and each episode opens with a statement that production costs, including filming, crew, food, fuel, lodging and activities, were paid by Great American Road Trip, Inc., and accepted as a gift by the Department. Many of the companies listed as sponsors are actively doing business with USDOT or are directly regulated by USDOT. According to a pitch deck obtained by Politico, Great American Road Trip, Inc. solicited sponsorships in tiers ranging from $110,000 to $1 million, with larger corporate donors receiving more prominent recognition on the project's website and in the series. USDOT's spokesperson has said the nonprofit is an independent organization and that how and from whom it accepts donations is its decision.

1. Did USDOT or the Secretary's office know the identity of any sponsor, or the amount of any sponsor's contribution, before accepting the gift?
   Answer: The Department entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Great American Road Trip, Inc. (GART, Inc.) in which it agreed to exercise its statutory gift acceptance authority to accept the gift of a video produced by GART, Inc., promoting America's 250th birthday, tourism, and the concept of the great American road trip. The MOA made no reference to private sponsorship of the video, nor any contributions made by private sponsors to GART, Inc, in support of the video. The MOA specified that it constituted the entire understanding of the parties with respect to the gift, including the video. The MOA did not provide the Department information with regard to the sponsors of GART, INC.

2. Did any Department official screen sponsors for conflicts before the donation was accepted, and if not, why not?
   Answer: See the answer to Question No. 1.

3. For each sponsor listed on greatamericanroadtrip.org, identify every rulemaking, enforcement matter, certification, waiver, grant, contract, or petition pending before the Department or its operating administrations between September 2025 and the present. Please also provide the calendars of the Secretary and senior political staff reflecting meetings with any sponsor or its representatives during that period, and state whether sponsorship of the project was discussed at any such meeting.
   Answer: The gift of the video from GART, Inc., to the Department pursuant to the MOA was unrelated to any private sponsorship of the video or any contributions made by private sponsors to GART, Inc. in support of the video.

Wheelchair Rule

In November 2025, Senator Baldwin and I sent a letter to Secretary Duffy and Administrator Bedford regarding USDOT's decision to delay enforcement of provisions of the "Ensuring Safe Accommodations for Air Travelers with Disabilities Using Wheelchairs" final rule (the Wheelchair Rule). Sections 542 and 543 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 (Public Law 118-63) directed USDOT to set minimum training standards for personnel who assist wheelchair users and for personnel who stow their devices.

The notice published in the Federal Register on September 30, 2025, outlined USDOT's decision to delay enforcement of four provisions intended to hold airlines accountable for mishandled wheelchairs, require more frequent training for airline personnel and contractors who provide physical assistance to passengers with disabilities, to notify passengers in writing when they check their device for stowage in the baggage compartment that they have a right to file a claim with the airline if their devices is mishandled, and reimburse passengers who must change to a more expensive flight because their device does not fit on their originally scheduled aircraft. The notice stated that enforcement would be delayed until December 31, 2026, with a target of August 2026 for issuance of a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) for a so-called Wheelchair Rule II. In January 2026, Secretary Duffy responded to our letter again stating the goal of August 2026 for the NPRM. The NPRM was not released. Instead, on August 4, 2026, the Department extended the enforcement pause to April 30, 2027, and expanded it to a fifth provision, the annual hands-on training requirement under the 2023 accessible lavatory rule.

1. The Department has stated that Wheelchair Rule II will "consider whether to modify" the paused provisions. Will you commit to lifting the enforcement pause on the three provisions that do not involve training frequency—the liability presumption, the written notice of the right to file a claim, and the fare-difference reimbursement—now, without waiting for Wheelchair Rule II?
   a. If not, please explain, for each provision, what the Department believes is deficient about it and what burden its enforcement would impose on carriers.
   b. With respect to training, will you commit that any revised standard will require recurrent training at least as frequently as the 18-month interval Congress set in Section 542, and that initial training for all covered personnel will remain mandatory on the current schedule?

Answer: Although the Department paused enforcement of select provisions through April 30, 2027, the practical impact on passengers with disabilities is minimal. Core accessibility

protections, mandatory initial hands-on training, and carrier liability for damaged mobility devices remain in full force. Specific details regarding the issues under reconsideration as part of the Wheelchair II Rule are as follows:

- **ACAA Violation Liability Presumption**: The pause applies strictly to the evidentiary standard establishing a rebuttable presumption of a regulatory violation, which governs whether the Department would presume that the mishandling constitutes an ACAA violation for purposes of departmental enforcement and civil penalties. As DOT guidance confirms, airlines remain legally obligated to return assistive devices in the condition received and to pay to repair or replace damaged devices up to the original purchase price.
- **Pre-Departure Written Notice**: Existing rules (14 CFR §§ 382.130(b) and 382.151(c)) already require carriers to notify passengers of their claim rights and how to contact a Complaints Resolution Official (CRO) whenever a device is mishandled or an issue is unresolved. Distributing written notices at check-in for every device—when most travel without incident—may be redundant and impose unnecessary administrative burdens on carriers.
- **Fare-Difference Reimbursement**: Section 544(b) of the 2024 FAA Reauthorization Act addresses aircraft size limitations by requiring a full refund of fares, fees, and taxes when a passenger cannot travel because their wheelchair cannot fit in the cargo hold. DOT is evaluating through Wheelchair Rule II whether Congress's selection of a full refund, rather than imposing open-ended fare-difference reimbursement obligations on carriers, is the appropriate statutory mechanism.
- **Training**: The enforcement pause applies solely to the 12-month frequency of recurrent refresher training (including under the 2023 accessible lavatory rule) and does not affect underlying hands-on training mandates. All covered personnel were required to complete mandatory initial hands-on training by June 2026, and that requirement remains fully enforceable. Because a 12-month recurrent cycle would not have begun until June 2027 at the earliest, pausing enforcement through April 30, 2027 has had no practical effect on current operations. Although the Department cannot prejudge the final rule, any revised recurrent training interval will align with Sections 542 and 543 of the 2024 FAA Reauthorization Act, which explicitly authorize recurrent training frequencies of up to 18 months.

2. Did USDOT or FAA consult disability rights organizations before deciding to delay enforcement of the Wheelchair Rule in September 2025, or before extending the pause in August 2026? If so, please identify each organization, the date of the consultation, and whether it supported the delay. If not, why not?

Answer: The Department did not hold formal consultations with disability rights organizations prior to issuing the September 2025 or August 2026 notifications of enforcement discretion because enforcement discretion notices are internal policy decisions rather than rulemaking actions subject to notice-and-comment procedures. However, the Department remains actively engaged with the disability community. For example, following outreach from Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) on October 15, 2025, regarding public

confusion over airline liability for damaged wheelchairs, the Department updated its website in plain language on November 4, 2025, to clarify that airlines remain fully responsible for repairing or replacing damaged mobility devices. In addition, disability rights organizations and all other stakeholders will have a full opportunity to provide input through the upcoming Wheelchair Rule II notice-and-comment rulemaking process.

3. Please identify every airline, trade association, or other stakeholder that USDOT or FAA met with or received written communication from regarding the enforcement pause or Wheelchair Rule II between January 2025 and the present, including the carrier whose request prompted the addition of the fifth provision August 2026. For each, please provide the date and a summary of the request made.

   Answer: The Department's public dockets reflect the following ex parte communications with external stakeholders regarding the enforcement pause and Wheelchair Rule II between January 2025 and the present:

- Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) (Meeting on September 30, 2025; Ex Parte Memo filed October 6, 2025 – Docket No. DOT-OST-2025-1755-0001 / DOT-OST-2025-1744-0001): At MDA's request, DOT Office of the General Counsel staff met with MDA representatives to discuss enforcing protections for air travelers with disabilities and MDA's position on the 2024 Wheelchair Rule. In a September 17, 2025 memorandum submitted ahead of the meeting, MDA urged DOT to swiftly enforce the rule as written and retain the provisions identified for review in the Spring 2025 Unified Agenda (rebuttable presumption of a violation, 12-month refresher training, passenger notifications, and fare-difference reimbursement).
- Nineteen Disability Rights and Veterans' Organizations (Incoming Letter dated September 16, 2025; DOT Response dated October 30, 2025 – Docket No. DOT-OST-2025-1755-0002): Nineteen organizations (led by Paralyzed Veterans of America) wrote to Secretary Duffy urging DOT to maintain and enforce all provisions of the December 2024 Wheelchair Rule (including training, notification, and mishandling protections) and to refrain from imposing any new regulatory burdens on passengers with disabilities. On October 30, 2025, DOT's Office of the General Counsel responded, confirming that the incoming letter was added to the Wheelchair Rule II docket and encouraging the organizations to participate in the upcoming notice-and-comment rulemaking.
- Delta Air Lines (Correspondence dated April 28, 2026 – Docket No. DOT-OST-2025-1755-0004): Delta Air Lines contacted DOT's Office of the General Counsel requesting a discussion and flexibility to align the annual hands-on flight attendant training requirement under the 2023 Accessible Lavatory Rule (14 CFR § 382.63, effective October 2, 2026) with Delta's FAA-approved 18-month recurrent training cycle. Delta noted that the mismatch would require bringing approximately 29,000 flight attendants in for off-cycle training. This request preceded the Department's August 4, 2026 Notification of Enforcement Discretion.

In addition, the administrative record includes eight public comments submitted by airlines, trade associations, and disability organizations in response to the Department's April 3, 2025 Deregulatory Request for Information (90 Fed. Reg. 14593; Docket No. DOT-OST-2025-0026).

- Air France KLM Royal Dutch Airlines (April 30, 2025; Docket No. DOT-OST-2025-0026-0622)
- Association of Value Airlines (May 5, 2025; Docket No. DOT-OST-2025-0026-0821)
- Center for Transportation Policy (May 5, 2025; Docket No. DOT-OST-2025-0026-0822)
- National Disability Organizations (May 5, 2025; Docket No. DOT-OST-2025-0026-0824)
- Airlines for America (May 5, 2025; Docket No. DOT-OST-2025-0026-0845)
- Spirit Airlines (May 5, 2025; Docket No. DOT-OST-2025-0026-0869)
- Air New Zealand (May 5, 2025; Docket No. DOT-OST-2025-0026-0907)
- International Air Transport Association (IATA) (May 6, 2025; Docket No. DOT-OST-2025-0026-0796)

The full text of all ex parte filings and public comments is publicly available on Regulations.gov under their respective docket numbers.

For each of the last five calendar years, please provide: (a) the number of disability-related complaints the Department received involving wheelchairs or other mobility devices, disaggregated by category (damage, delay, loss, improper transfer or assistance, and other); (b) the number of such complaints airlines reported to the Department under 14 CFR 382.157; and (c) the number of wheelchairs and scooters airlines reported as mishandled to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, with the mishandling rate per 100 enplaned devices.

Answer: (a) Disability-Related Complaints Received by DOT: The Department is currently compiling the data regarding disability-related complaints it received directly that involve wheelchairs and other mobility devices for the past five calendar years (2021–2025) and will provide those figures to your office promptly upon completion.

(b) Carrier-Reported Disability Complaints (14 CFR § 382.157): Annual reports detailing the number and category of disability-related complaints received by airlines and reported to the Department under 14 CFR § 382.157 for calendar years 2004 through 2024 are publicly available on the Department's website at https://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/annual-report-disability-related-air-travel-complaints. Calendar year 2025 data is currently being finalized for public release and will be published shortly, while calendar year 2026 data is due from carriers on January 25, 2027.

(c) BTS Mishandled Wheelchair and Scooter Data: Pursuant to data reported by carriers to the Department's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), the total number of wheelchairs and scooters enplaned, the number reported as mishandled, and the mishandling rate per 100 enplaned devices for the past five calendar years (2021–2025) along with 2019, 2020, and the first six months of 2026 for context are set forth below:

Year	2026 (First 6 Months)	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Transported	427,259	907,259	899,385	835,327	741,582	532,306	268,676	685,792
Mishandled	4,554	9,910	11,357	11,527	11,389	7,239	3,464	10,548
Rate	1.06	1.09	1.26	1.38	1.54	1.36	1.29	1.54

5. What actions has USDOT taken to hold airlines accountable for addressing complaints related to wheelchair damage or airport assistance services?

Answer: The Department continues to enforce the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) and 14 CFR Part 382 through targeted consent orders and investigative resolutions that require carriers to invest directly in accessibility improvements that go above and beyond baseline Federal requirements:

- Amended Consent Order Against American Airlines (Order 2025-12-5, issued December 9, 2025): The Department amended its prior $50 million consent order against American Airlines so that – rather than paying the remaining $16.7 million balance to the U.S. Treasury – the carrier is required to direct $16.8 million toward tangible benefits for passengers with disabilities. Specifically, the amended order requires American Airlines to invest $16.1 million in enhanced wheelchair-handling equipment and tracking systems above and beyond Part 382 requirements (including 119 additional wheelchair lifts at high-volume hubs, 23 additional wheelchair movers, and a $10.6 million point-by-point wheelchair tracking system accessible to passengers via mobile app and web), alongside $700,000 in direct goodwill compensation credited for affected passengers. American must submit sworn documentation verifying these expenditures or pay any unverified balance to the U.S. Treasury.

- Investigative Resolutions Requiring Proactive Accessibility Commitments from Two Major U.S. Airlines: In addition to formal consent orders, the Department resolved investigations into the wheelchair assistance practices of two other major U.S. airlines in 2026 only after securing binding commitments to implement operational and technological measures that exceed ACAA requirements:

    - Wheelchair Durability Engineering Challenge: One major carrier committed to dedicating significant resources, in partnership with a non-profit disability advocacy organization, to design, administer, and fund an engineering challenge focused on developing concrete design and technological improvements to protect wheelchairs from damage during commercial air travel, alongside undergoing a review of its physical transfer and training protocols.

    - Digital, In-Flight, and Airport Accessibility Enhancements & Transfer Protocol Review: A second major carrier committed to maintaining elevated

baseline accessibility standards, including WCAG 2.2 Level AA conformance for its mobile app, 100 percent closed captioning and expanded audio description for pre-loaded in-flight entertainment, accessible in-flight maps across more than 650 aircraft, and dedicated airport sensory spaces at two major hubs. That airline also submitted updated hands-on transfer assistance training protocols that the Department reviewed and verified for compliance with federal safety and dignity standards.

6. Airlines are required under 14 CFR 382.155 to respond to written disability complaints within 30 days. Does the Department audit or otherwise verify airline compliance with that requirement?
    a. If so, please provide the results for the last three years. If not, will you commit to beginning to do so and to reporting the results to this committee annually?
    b. Does the Department track the time from a passenger's complaint to the repair, replacement, or reimbursement of the damaged device? If not, will you commit to requiring airlines to report that information?

Answer: The Department monitors carrier responsiveness to disability-related complaints through its modernized complaint-tracking system while relying on substantive regulatory remedies under the 2024 Wheelchair Rule to minimize repair and replacement delays for damaged mobility devices.

- Verification of Airline Compliance with the 30-Day Response Requirement (14 CFR § 382.155): With the launch of the Department's modernized Aviation Complaint, Enforcement, and Reporting System (ACERS) in August 2025, DOT now directly tracks carrier response times for complaints submitted through the ACERS portal. Airlines are required to upload their written responses to passengers into ACERS and record the exact date each response was sent. Because ACERS captures both the date a complaint is transmitted to the carrier and the response date, the Department can automatically verify whether carriers meet the 30-day response deadline under 14 CFR § 382.155 for complaints routed through DOT. Because ACERS launched in August 2025, automated system-wide tracking data is only available from that date forward rather than for the full three-year lookback period; the Department will compile available compliance metrics since launch and share them with the Committee.

- Tracking Repair, Replacement, or Reimbursement Timelines: The Department does not track the elapsed time from a passenger's initial complaint to the final repair, replacement, or reimbursement of a damaged wheelchair or scooter, and does not plan to impose a new reporting mandate on carriers at this time. Instead, the 2024 Wheelchair Rule directly addresses turnaround delays by empowering passengers with two distinct resolution options when an airline damages a wheelchair or scooter:

    1. Carrier-Managed Repair or Replacement: The airline arranges and pays for the repair or replacement of the device with an equivalent or greater level of function and safety within a reasonable timeframe.

2. Passenger-Selected Vendor: The passenger has the right to arrange the repair or replacement directly through their own preferred vendor, and the airline is required to handle transport of the device and pay the vendor directly for the associated costs.

As the Department explained in the 2024 Wheelchair Rule's preamble, it is aware of passengers facing prolonged delays while waiting for airlines to locate a local repair shop, negotiate estimates, or process out-of-pocket reimbursements. By allowing passengers to go directly to their preferred vendor while requiring the carrier to cover shipping and pay the vendor directly, the Department intended to accelerate turnaround times and minimize the time a traveler spends relying on an ill-fitting loaner chair.

Corridor Identification and Development Program

Rail is a critical component of our Nation's transportation system, and it is especially critical to Illinois, with more trackage radiating from Chicago in more directions than any other city in North America. Congress created the Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) designated it as the primary mechanism for developing new intercity passenger rail service outside the Northeast Corridor. Without Corridor ID, promising Illinois projects have no realistic path to implementation.

Corridors serving Illinois have stalled at the transition from Step 1 to Step 2. FRA's most recent posted obligation report, dated March 31, 2026, shows every Illinois-serving corridor still in Step 1, including the Peoria–Chicago corridor sponsored by the City of Peoria, the Chicago–St. Louis and Chicago–Carbondale corridors sponsored by Illinois DOT, and the Hannibal, Green Bay, Fort Wayne–Columbus, Louisville–Indianapolis, and Indianapolis–Chicago corridors sponsored by neighboring States and localities. FRA told sponsors in December 2025 that it was targeting January 2026 for a Step 2 Directed Notice of Funding Opportunity, yet nearly a year later these sponsors have no Step 2 funding and no timeline, despite Illinois DOT, the City of Peoria, and their partners devoting substantial staff time to planning, technical analysis, public engagement, and securing matching funds.

1. For each Corridor ID corridor serving Illinois—including Peoria–Chicago; Chicago–Quad Cities; Chicago–St. Louis; Chicago–Carbondale; Milwaukee–Green Bay; the Hannibal extension of the Chicago–Quincy corridor; Chicago–Fort Wayne–Columbus–Pittsburgh; Louisville–Indianapolis; and Indianapolis–Chicago—please provide the date FRA received the sponsor's Step 1 deliverables, the date of FRA approval if any, the current status of the Step 2 grant, and the specific reason the corridor has not advanced.

   Answer: We recognize the hard work the project sponsors have put into these projects. Currently, Chicago to Quad Cities; Chicago to Carbondale; Chicago to Indianapolis; Milwaukee to Green Bay; Hannibal Extension; Louisville to Indianapolis; and Chicago to St. Louis have not completed Step 1 deliverables.

Peoria-Chicago and Chicago to Pittsburgh remain in review due to lack of support from the host railroad.

FRA is currently sequencing future Corridor ID awards following a very busy series of NRP, CRISI, and RCE announcements that corresponded to the bulk of FRA competitive grant funding – over $9.5 billion in announcements over the past year. FRA is evaluating the readiness of individual corridors to advance to the next phase of development. Since each step of the Corridor ID program operates as a new, standalone grant opportunity, this sequencing ensures corridors are fully prepared for their next discrete phase of funding.

2. If confirmed, will you commit to prioritizing the Corridor ID Program, as Congress intended, to help States shepherd these projects through planning to completion, including providing the Federal share Congress appropriated for this purpose?

   Answer: If confirmed, I will work with FRA to assist the Secretary in administering the Corridor ID program in accordance with all statutory requirements and directives.

Surface Transportation Reauthorization

The IIJA's surface transportation authorizations were set to expire on September 30, 2026. Congress extended them through December 11, 2026 (Public Law 119–103), while negotiations over a new surface transportation bill continue. USDOT has been an active participant in that debate. In a July 22, 2026, letter, Secretary Duffy described USDOT's proposals as "markers and anchors" for the longer-term reauthorization bill and urged Congress to adopt them even in a short-term extension. Those proposals would eliminate the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund and end the IIJA's advance appropriations for rail and transit.

Illinois has more at stake in the rail title than almost any State. A reauthorization that works for Chicago's freight gateway, Amtrak's Midwest network, and the Corridor ID projects discussed above will require the Department to engage with this office as a partner, not only with the majority. My office's recent experience has been uneven: our November 2025 letter on the Wheelchair Rule waited months for a reply that restated a deadline that USDOT then missed, and sponsors of Illinois rail corridors have been unable to get basic status information from FRA. The Office of Governmental Affairs is where that pattern either changes or continues. If confirmed, you will be the Department's principal liaison to Congress during the drafting of a multiyear surface transportation bill. Please respond to each of the following:

1. Will you commit that the Department will provide technical assistance on legislative text requested by my office within the same timeframe, and at the same level of detail, that it provides to the majority, and that no request will be declined or delayed because the proposal differs from the administration's priorities?
   Answer: I will work with the relevant DOT offices to ensure that the Department is appropriately responsive on a bipartisan basis to all congressional requests.

2. Will you commit to sharing any legislative proposals, section-by-section analyses, or technical drafting assistance the Department transmits to committee leadership with both the majority and minority at the same time, rather than after the fact?
   Answer: I will work with the relevant DOT offices to ensure that the Department is appropriately responsive on a bipartisan basis to all congressional requests.

3. Will you commit to a written response to every congressional letter from my office within 30 days, and, where the Department cannot answer substantively in that time, to an interim reply identifying who is handling the matter and when a full response will come?
   Answer: I will work with the relevant DOT offices to ensure that the Department is appropriately responsive on a bipartisan basis to all congressional requests.

4. The Department has proposed ending advance appropriations for rail and transit. Will you commit to provide my office, within 60 days of confirmation, a briefing from the relevant operating administrations on the projected effect of that proposal on every Illinois rail and transit project that currently relies on IIJA advance appropriations, including the Corridor ID corridors and the CTA and Metra grants listed in this submission?
   Answer: I will work with the relevant DOT offices to ensure that the Department is appropriately responsive on a bipartisan basis to all congressional requests.

5. Will you commit that the Department will faithfully implement the IIJA and any extension Congress enacts, including obligating funds Congress has appropriated, for the duration of the reauthorization debate, and will you notify this committee before the Department withholds, delays, or conditions any formula or discretionary funds in a manner not required by statute?
   Answer: I will work with the relevant DOT offices to ensure that the Department is appropriately responsive on a bipartisan basis to all congressional requests.

Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization

As one of the authors of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024, I secured provisions that the Department and the FAA are now responsible for implementing. Many of these carry statutory deadlines, and several have already slipped. The Act contains hundreds of requirements for the FAA, and I recognize that not every mandate can proceed at the same pace. What I cannot accept is learning about delays from the Federal Register, or after the deadline has passed. The Office of Governmental Affairs is the Department's channel for keeping Congress informed, and the Department has used that channel inconsistently.

1. Will you commit to providing my office, within 60 days of confirmation, a table covering every provision of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 for which my office was a lead author, listing for each the statutory deadline, the responsible office within the Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST) or FAA, the current status, the specific barrier to completion where one exists, and the projected completion date? Will you commit to update that table quarterly for the remainder of the act's authorization?
   Answer: I will work with the FAA to respond to this request.

2. Will you commit that when the Department or the FAA determines it will miss a statutory deadline on any of these provisions, my office will be notified before the deadline passes, with the reason and a revised date, rather than after the fact or through a Federal Register notice?
   Answer: I will work with the FAA to respond to this request.

3. As Congress prepares to consider the next FAA reauthorization, will you commit that the Department will provide technical assistance on legislative text requested by my office within the same timeframe and that no request will be declined or delayed because the proposal differs from the administration's priorities?
   Answer: I will work with the FAA to ensure that it is appropriately responsive on a bipartisan basis to all congressional requests.

Office of Commercial Space Travel and the FAA's Brand-New Air Traffic Control System
On November 5, 2026, Secretary Duffy announced four regulatory actions to streamline commercial space launch and reentry licensing. The press release cited an anticipated 1,000 launches per year by 2030 and an expansion of the Office of Commercial Space Transportation. With the alarming uptick in near misses in the National Airspace System (NAS) and recent devastating collisions—any additional strain on the NAS should be carefully considered with decisions supported by data.

1. What analysis has FAA conducted to ensure the safety of the NAS during commercial space launches and any anticipated increase in traffic?

   Answer: FAA commercial space regulations (14 CFR Part 450) and safety risk management principles under FAA Order 1030.8 protect aircraft during commercial launches and reentries.

To maintain safety as launch cadence grows, FAA Order 1030.8 establishes three commitments:

1. Developing procedures and technologies to integrate more operations safely while reducing AHA buffer sizes.
2. Ensuring nominal and off-nominal operations include coordination with affected airspace users and external Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs).
3. Completing Safety Risk Management (SRM) processes before changing Air Traffic Organization (ATO) procedures, keeping operator conditions consistent with Part 450.

Before each mission, the FAA uses prior-year hourly traffic data over multiple days to analyze peak demand and potential airspace impacts. The agency evaluates and adjusts launch windows with operators when feasible to avoid peak traffic, while coordinating with adjacent ANSPs on traffic management initiatives to safely accommodate displaced flights.

2. I am concerned this new workload will further strain air traffic controllers who are already stretched thin. What is FAA's plan to incorporate the input of air traffic

controllers in the development of any plane to integrate commercial space operations into the NAS?

Answer: Early stakeholder coordination and repeatable scheduling processes guide National Airspace System (NAS) space integration. Led by FAA Air Traffic Organization (ATO) Space Operations alongside affected air traffic facilities, aviation stakeholders, and international ANSPs, planners evaluate traffic flows, sector volume, and local constraints to build Airspace Management Plans (AMPs), launch windows, and Aircraft Hazard Areas (AHAs). During operations, controllers coordinate with ATO Space Operations to manage traffic and safely resume standard flows, utilizing post-launch feedback and Collective Bargaining Agreement input to refine procedures while briefing stakeholders on closed airspace via NOTAM.

This operational model supports President Donald Trump's updated National Space Transportation Policy (NSPM-17, released August 20, 2026), which supersedes the 2013 policy and treats airspace and radiofrequency spectrum as core space infrastructure. NSPM-17 targets over 1,000 annual U.S. launches and reentries by 2030 across all orbital regimes through Mars, directing agencies to expand ranges, designate a new Federal reentry site, support responsive launches within 48 hours, prioritize U.S. commercial providers, and streamline FAA licensing and FCC spectrum access.

To implement these mandates and address projections of 10,000 annual FAA-licensed operations by 2035, Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy launched an FAA Request for Information (Docket No. FAA-2026-9736) on August 21, 2026, soliciting public and industry input on two priorities:

- New Spaceport Siting: Alleviating bottlenecks at Florida and California ranges—which handle 83% of U.S. launches—by identifying viable new coastal, offshore, or underutilized sites with safe over-water trajectories and infrastructure access.

- Priority Airspace Corridors: Establishing dynamically activated "critical space launch corridors" and integrating space operations into air traffic control modernization to enable faster launch cadences while minimizing commercial aviation disruptions.

3. Space launches require coordination across the Federal Government—FAA, NASA, DoD, and FCC—along with commercial entities. What is FAA's plan to coordinate all impacted entities with increased commercial space launches?

Answer: To coordinate across Federal agencies (FAA, NASA, DoD/DoW, FCC, Commerce) and commercial operators as launch cadences surge, the FAA relies on three core frameworks:

1. **Statutory Interagency Reviews (14 CFR Part 450):** As the sole commercial licensing authority under 51 U.S.C. Chapter 509, the FAA Office of Commercial Space Transportation (AST) coordinates interagency reviews to satisfy jurisdiction-specific mandates.

2. **Federal Range Streamlining:** Because most U.S. launches use or affect Federal ranges (Cape Canaveral, Vandenberg, Kennedy Space Center), the FAA works with NASA and the DoW/U.S. Space Force via the Common Standards Working Group (CSWG) to eliminate duplicative requirements.

3. **Strategic Alignment:** To address long-term capacity constraints, the FAA implements Executive Order 14335 and the National Space Transportation Policy (August 20, 2026) through executive coordination bodies and interagency MOUs that align regulatory timelines and expedite environmental reviews.

For airspace integration, the FAA collaborates with NASA, DoW, space operators, and aviation stakeholders, deploying technologies like SpORT for mission planning and applying lessons from recurring launches to minimize air traffic disruption. Balancing launch needs with equitable National Airspace System (NAS) access, the FAA uses traffic modeling, demand forecasting, and automation to manage dynamic airspace. Through joint planning forums and pre-launch teleconferences—including during peak holiday periods—the FAA works with the U.S. Space Force and operators to shorten closure durations and encourage overnight or low-demand launch windows.

Finally, the FAA Air Traffic Organization's Space Collaborative Decision Making (Space CDM) program connects space operators and airline associations to improve pre-mission data sharing and real-time situational awareness. Operators are encouraged to share schedules and connect to the FAA's Space Data Integrator for live telemetry, while a new joint Space CDM Airspace Optimization workgroup develops strategies to integrate airspace more efficiently.

Status of Administrator Bedford Questions for the Record

On May 19, 2026, FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation Subcommittee on Aviation, Space, and Innovation regarding the agency's response to the NTSB final report on the January 29, 2025, mid-air collision near Reagan National Airport (DCA). I submitted several Questions for the Record, to which I have yet to receive a response.

1. What is the status of the Questions for the Record submitted to Administrator Bedford following the May 19, 2026, hearing?
   Answer: Following the May 19, 2026, hearing, the Administrator received an extensive number of detailed QFRs. Responses to all QFRs are in the final stages of review.

2. By what date will the FAA commit to providing a response to the QFRs submitted following the May 19, 2026, hearing?
   Answer: I expect the responses to be submitted by early December.

Status of USDOT Grants Awarded in Illinois

1. Please provide a list of all USDOT grants awarded in Illinois in the last five fiscal years that have not been fully obligated, including grants awarded by USDOT programs outside of Commerce's jurisdiction.

Answer: The attached spreadsheet ("Duckworth Grants Q1 - Illinois Grants Announced FY22-26 (and early Oct. 2026) Not Obligated (November 2026)")

2. Please provide a list of grants awarded to Illinois recipients that were obligated in the five prior fiscal years and then terminated, withdrawn, or reduced in scope during calendar year 2025 and calendar year 2026, with the justification for each.

   Answer: DOT records reveal only one grant potentially fitting this description: FY24, Commercial Driver's License Program Implementation, Illinois Secretary of State, 2024 CDLPI: Assessment, Monitoring and Expansion of Illinois CDL Program, $3,617,244, FMCSA. The grant agreement has been amended to the effect that the State will not receive $30,000 for a planned translation project that was part of the original award.

3. Please provide the status of each of the following grants awarded in Illinois, including whether each grant is fully obligated and, if not, the anticipated time and remaining steps for the grant to be fully obligated:

- FY20, Highway Construction Training Program, Illinois DOT, Expansion of IDOT's Highway Construction Careers Training Program at South Suburban College to include a Materials Testing Track in its existing program, $354,000.00, FHWA
  - Answer: This grant does not appear in DOT records of competitive grants. More information is needed.
- FY21, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), Illinois Department of Transportation, Rockford Complete Streets Revitalization Project, $16,384,905.00, OST
  - Answer: Grant agreement development underway with pre-award authority.
- FY21, Highway Construction Training Program, Illinois DOT, Expansion of IDOT's Highway Construction Careers Training Program at South Suburban College to include a Materials Testing Track in its existing program, $354,000.00, FHWA
  - Answer: This grant does not appear in DOT records of competitive grants. More information is needed.
- FY22, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), Pace Suburban Bus Division of the RTA, Harvey Intermodal Transportation Center, $20,000,000.00, OST
  - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY22, Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Grants, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), CTA Electric Bus Program: Chicago Garage Electrification and Electric Bus Purchase, $28,836,080.00, FTA
  - Answer: grant discontinued by DOT.
- FY22, Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grants (CRISI), Cook County IL, West Cook Rail Safety Improvement Project, $2,888,000.00, FRA
  - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY22, Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID), Illinois Department of Transportation, Chicago to Quad Cities Corridor, $500,000.00, FRA
  - Answer: grant agreement development underway.

- FY22, Highway Construction Training Program, Illinois DOT, Expansion of IDOT's Highway Construction Careers Training Program at South Suburban College to include a Materials Testing Track in its existing program, $288,000.00, FHWA
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY22, Port Infrastructure Development Program Grants (PIDP), Kaskaskia Regional Port District, KRPD #1 - Phase 2 Rail Yard and Rail Corridor Improvements, $8,000,000.00, MARAD
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY23, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission Planning and Demonstration Activities, $945,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY23, Areas of Persistent Poverty Program, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), CTA's Englewood Line Racine Station Restoration Project, $778,500.00, FTA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY23, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), Chicago Transit Authority, 95th Street Terminal Electric Bus Improvements, $25,000,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY23, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), Pace Suburban Bus Division of the RTA, Pace Pulse Halsted Line, $20,000,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY23, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), Village of Savoy, Curtis Road Grade Separation and Complete Streets Project, $22,683,587.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY23, Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grants (CFI), City of Chicago, Charge Up Chicago! Chicago Community Resources and Charging Infrastructure Implementation, $15,000,000.00, FHWA
    - Answer: grant agreement development not started.
- FY23, Competitive Grants For Rail Vehicle Replacement, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), CTA's Railcar Purchase, $200,000,000.00, FTA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY23, Fueling Aviation's Sustainable Transition, Buckeye Terminals, LLC, Buckeye SAF Distribution Expansion Project, $24,054,883.20, FAA
    - Answer: grant rescinded under Public Law No. 119-21.
- FY23, Low or No Emission (Bus) Grants, Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Department of Transportation Statewide Battery Electric Paratransit Buses Replacement, $12,600,000.00, FTA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed [DOT records this project's title as "Illinois DOT Statewide Paratransit Vehicle Replacements"].
- FY23, Low or No Emission (Bus) Grants, Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Department of Transportation Statewide Deployment of Battery Electric Paratransit Buses, $12,299,377.00, FTA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.

- FY23, Pollinator-Friendly Practices on Roadsides and Highway Rights-of-Way, Illinois Department of Transportation, Enhancing and Diversifying Pollinator Friendly Practices on Illinois Department of Transportation Right of Way, $150,000.00, FHWA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY23, Port Infrastructure Development Program Grants (PIDP), Shawneetown Regional Port District, Shawneetown Regional Port Revitalization Project, $10,120,000.00, MARAD
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY23, Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT), Illinois Department of Transportation, I-290 Maywood Flood Relief Project, $8,646,190.00, FHWA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY23, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), Chicago Department of Transportation, Ogden Avenue Corridor Improvements Project, $20,927,748.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY23, Highway Construction Training Program, Illinois DOT, Expansion of IDOT's Highway Construction Careers Training Program at South Suburban College to include a Materials Testing Track in its existing program, $288,000.00, FHWA
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), City of Edwardsville, Goshen Road and Liberty Trail Multimodal Transportation Improvements, $21,241,730.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), Illinois Department of Transportation, Bloomington-Normal to Peoria Express Bus Feasibility Study, $1,200,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), Lake County, Cedar Lake Road Realignment and Mobility Improvement Project, $18,788,080.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Commercial Driver's License Program Implementation (CDLPI), Illinois Secretary of State, Assessment, Monitoring and Expansion of Illinois CDL Program, $3,617,244.00, FMCSA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY24, Competitive Grants For Rail Vehicle Replacement, Commuter Rail Division of the Regional Transportation Authority d/b/a Metra, Metra's Modern Railcars Project, $100,000,000.00, FTA
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway with pre-award authority.
- FY24, Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grants (CRISI), OmniTRAX Holdings Combined, Inc., Yard Area Rail Decongestion and Safety project, $40,955,000.00, FRA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY24, Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Program, Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District (MetroLINK), Expansion & Electrification of MetroLINK's Bi-State Passenger Ferryboat Network, $8,000,000.00, FTA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.

- FY24, Highway Construction Training Program, Illinois DOT, Expansion of IDOT's Highway Construction Careers Training Program at South Suburban College to include a Materials Testing Track in its existing program, $287,988.00, FHWA
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Low or No Emission (Bus) Grants, Greater Peoria Mass Transit District, Battery Electric Bus Purchase, $14,415,095.00, FTA
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway with pre-award authority.
- FY24, Low or No Emission (Bus) Grants, Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District, Expansion and Fire Safety Upgrades for Battery Electric Buses for MetroLINK's Operations and Maintenance Center, $10,000,000.00, FTA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY24, Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (INFRA), County of Kane, Randall Road Grade Separation and Intersection Safety Improvements Project, $25,000,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY24, Port Infrastructure Development Program Grants (PIDP), Illinois International Port District, Landing Dock Safety and Efficiency Project, $34,508,933.00, MARAD
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Port Infrastructure Development Program Grants (PIDP), Village of Hardin IL, Hardin Illinois River Terminal Elevator Project, $9,000,000.00, MARAD
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Port Infrastructure Development Program Grants (PIDP), Village of Hennepin, Hennepin Barge Terminal and Soybean Logistics Asset, $38,582,711.00, MARAD
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Railroad Crossing Elimination Grants, County of Will, Gougar Road at Wisconsin Central/Canadian National Railroad Grade Separation, $27,172,100.00, FRA
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway with pre-award authority.
- FY24, Railroad Crossing Elimination Grants, Illinois Department of Transportation, CREATE Project GS1, $43,125,000.00, FRA
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Railroad Crossing Elimination Grants, Village of Elmwood Park, Grand Avenue Proposed Grade Separation, $13,100,000.00, FRA
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program, City of Chicago Department of Transportation, Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project, $2,000,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Restoration and Enhancement Grant Program, National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak), Borealis Intercity Passenger Rail Service, $38,629,295.00, FRA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY24, Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program, Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Route 9 Multimodal Improvements, $52,860,638.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY24, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), Bensenville, Railroad Crossing Prediction Technology, $809,200.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.

- FY24, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), City of Alton, Pilots to Policy: Slow Down Alton, $215,152.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), City of Macomb, Macomb Illinois Street Safety Plan, $200,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY24, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), City of Chicago, North Avenue Corridor Improvements Project, $20,010,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), City of Danville, Solving Problems with Projects: Building Safer Roads for the Residents of Danville and Vermilion County, $9,999,900.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), City of Harvey, The City of Harvey's Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, $200,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), City of Waukegan, City of Waukegan: Demonstration Activities for Safer Streets, $254,365.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), Village of Oak Park, Vision Zero Oak Park: Applying the Safe System Approach, $1,126,880.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY24, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), Winnebago County Highway Department, Winnebago County Highway Department - Safe Roadway & Work Zone Initiative, $234,560.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District, Florida Avenue Multimodal Corridor Reconstruction, $9,950,930.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), City of Decatur, Jasper Street Corridor, $9,901,960.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), City of Galesburg, Galesburg Agricultural Intermodal Export Facility, $25,000,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), City of Rock Island, 11th Street (US 67) Reconstruction: 31st Ave to Blackhawk Road, $22,736,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), Metra, Rogers Park Station Reconstruction, $23,600,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), Metra, Van Buren Street Station Renovation, $24,485,250.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway with pre-award authority.

- FY25, Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Grants, Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System (dba Connect Transit), Downtown Bloomington Transit Center, $5,000,000.00, FTA
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway with pre-award authority.
- FY25, Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Grants, Springfield Mass Transit District, Springfield Mass Transit District FY25 Bus and Bus Facilities Grant, $6,733,300.00, FTA
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway with pre-award authority.
- FY25, Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grants (CFI), Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Equitable Future-Ready Electrification Infrastructure for Green Heavy-duty Transportation (E-FREIGHT) in Illinois, $100,000,000.00, FHWA
    - Answer: grant agreement development not started.
- FY25, Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grants (CFI), Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Aggregated Community Charging for the Chicago Metropolitan Region, $14,471,562.00, FHWA
    - Answer: grant agreement development not started.
- FY25, Low or No Emission (Bus) Grants, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), CTA's Bus Replacement Program—Purchase up to 150 Forty-Foot Diesel-Electric Hybrid Buses, $121,125,000.00, FTA
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway with pre-award authority.
- FY25, Low or No Emission (Bus) Grants, Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, Pace Hybrid Buses West Division, $39,780,000.00, FTA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY25, National Infrastructure Project Assistance (Mega), Illinois Department of Transportation, Interstate 290 (I-290)/IL171(1st Avenue) Interchange Project, $90,000,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Port Infrastructure Development Program Grants (PIDP), Kaskaskia Regional Port District, New South Dock for Improved Safety, Reliability, and Increased Cargo Storage, $11,249,875.00, MARAD
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Port Infrastructure Development Program Grants (PIDP), Seneca Regional Port District, Enhancing and Expanding the Economic Capacity and Output on the Illinois River, $11,221,110.00, MARAD
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program, City of Chicago Department of Transportation, Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project, $10,000,411.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program, County of Boone, Piscasaw Creek 3-Bridge Replacement Bundle in Boone County, IL, $592,469.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY25, Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program, County of Stephenson, Roundabout at Cedarville Road and Galena Road in Stephenson County, Illinois, $523,915.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.

- FY25, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), City of Belleville, Belleville's Safer Streets 4 All Initiative, $757,600.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), City of Quincy, Safe Streets for City of Quincy Safety Action Plan, $200,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), City of Shawneetown, Safe Streets Shawneetown, $95,470.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), McHenry County, Charles Road at Queen Anne Road Intersection Safety Project, $2,250,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), Town of Normal, Go:Safe McLean County: Applying Safe Systems in Town of Normal, $1,024,000.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY25, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), Village of Evergreen Park, Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety Demonstration Project, $209,600.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.
- FY26, Airport Terminal Program (ATP), Metropolitan Airport Authority of Peoria, General Wayne A. Downing Peoria International Airport (PIA), $3,800,000.00, FAA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY26, Airport Terminal Program (ATP), Metropolitan Airport Authority of Rock Island County, Quad Cities International Airport (MLI), $3,300,000.00, FAA
    - Answer: grant agreement signed.
- FY26, National Infrastructure Project Assistance (Mega), Illinois Department of Transportation, Interstate 290 (I-290)/IL171(1st Avenue) Interchange Project, $5,589,533.00, OST
    - Answer: grant agreement development underway.

SENATOR BEN RAY LUJÁN (D-NM)

(1) As you may know already, I introduced the bipartisan HALT Act, which requires that NHTSA adopt rules so that new cars manufactured have technology that would passively detect whether a driver is impaired or drunk. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recently completed a study in March on two motor vehicle crashes. In the report, the NTSB concluded that NHTSA's "failure to meet the statutory date for completing a final rule requiring advanced impaired driving technology on all new passenger vehicles continues to expose the public to dangers posed by impaired drivers." Every year, over 10,000 lives are lost due to the direct consequences of drunk driving. **If confirmed, will you commit to keeping my office informed of the progress made in ensuring that NHTSA implements the HALT Act and that anti-drunk driving technology is installed in new vehicles to save more than 10,000 lives per year?**
Answer: Yes.

(2) During the Trump administration, infrastructure projects in New Mexico have gone through a plethora of financial uncertainties. Putting at risk many of these projects even reaching completion. The New Mexico Department of Transportation recently stated that

it will take $7.5 billion dollars to address our state's road infrastructure needs. In 2022, the City of Albuquerque was awarded federal funding through a Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant to help build the Rail Trail. In September 2025, Under President Trump, the US Department of Transportation backtracked on that promise and withdrew this funding in a short letter with little to no justification. The city rightfully earned this grant award after a rigorous, objective, and competitive application and review process. The rescinding of this grant completely undermines the administrative, economic, and infrastructure arrangements that the city has made based on this award as well as the review processes that these grants undergo prior to receiving approval. **If confirmed, will you commit to sharing information with my office regarding ongoing federal grant decisions as they affect the state of New Mexico?**
Answer: Yes.

SENATOR JOHN HICKENLOOPER (D-CO)

Coordination with Congressional Offices

Communities across Colorado and throughout the country have significant financial commitments and contractual obligations tied to federal transportation awards. These communities depend on transparency and consistent guidance.

Mrs. Becera, in your conversation with my policy staff you raised the importance of coordination with Congressional offices. You see all 535 member offices as the Department of Transportation's constituents.

Mrs. Becera, you discussed implementing a process in which DOT would debrief with Congressional staff regarding federal award decisions. The goal of this communication is to ensure timely, transparent communication with grantees and Members of Congress about project status, funding decisions, and potential delays happening in their states.

Question 1: **Mrs. Becera,** do you commit to implementing, sharing, maintaining these processes so that communities in Colorado receive clear, reliable information and the financial impacts of delays are minimized?
Answer: Yes.