



July 15, 2026

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

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

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

The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

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

On behalf of the Modern Skies Coalition, representing more than 50 leading aviation stakeholders in the United States, we write to thank you for your leadership and support for upgrading our nation's aging air traffic control (ATC) system. As Congress considers possible legislation to provide additional resources for important national priorities, we urge you to allocate \$20 billion for closing the funding gap for the Brand-New Air Traffic Control System (BNATCS) which is a transformational ATC modernization effort. Partial funding risks stranded investments, prolonged reliance on obsolete systems, higher lifecycle costs, and continued operational strain across the National Airspace System (NAS). We also recommend the continued bipartisan, bicameral support for robust Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Facilities & Equipment (F&E) funding in the annual appropriations process.

We commend the work of appropriators to keep a regular-order, bipartisan appropriations process on track. Our industry is inextricably integrated with the federal government and its employees, and we will continue to strongly support efforts to keep the appropriations process functioning to avoid the specter of another shutdown.

Modernizing our nation's ATC system is a national imperative. Enhancing the safety and efficiency of the National Airspace System (NAS) is long overdue and will ensure the continued flow of people and commerce to maintain America's global leadership role in aviation and aerospace. Other nations continue to invest aggressively in next-generation air traffic technologies and aviation infrastructure. To remain the global leader in aviation, aerospace innovation and air transportation, the United States must continue making strategic investments that keep pace with evolving technologies and growing operational demands. Besides commercial and general aviation, the NAS supports emergency response, disaster relief and continuity of government operations. Modernization also will improve resilience against cyber threats, equipment failures and natural disasters while strengthening the nation's critical infrastructure.

As you know, Congress provided an initial \$12.5 billion "down payment" for ATC modernization as part of reconciliation legislation, and appropriators have built on this significant one-time infusion by increasing annual funding for the FAA F&E account from approximately \$3 billion to \$4 billion annually, demonstrating bipartisan and bicameral support for investment in critical ATC assets.

Although the ATC system needs continued improvement and investment, the FAA and U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) have made strong initial progress putting these new resources to work for the traveling public and airspace users, rightly focusing on improvements to foundational technologies that undergird the NAS and prioritizing systems that provide clear safety and efficiency enhancements. These early successes—all within a single year of announcing the "Brand New Air Traffic Control System" (BNATCS) initiative—include replacement of more than half of all copper wiring with modern fiber optics, the accelerated deployment of electronic flight strips and surface awareness detection technology to boost safety at dozens of airports, the conversion of outdated analog voice switches and radios to digital systems and contracts awarded with plans in place for the replacement of hundreds of aging radars.

However, both DOT and FAA leadership have been clear that an additional \$20 billion is necessary to finish the job, including the replacement and refurbishment of hundreds of aging ATC facilities around the country, deploying state-of-the-art surveillance automation technologies for controllers and the development of advanced airspace traffic management tools to improve safety and reduce delays. This funding will ensure a robust and world-class manufacturing ecosystem of companies that will build the BNATCS in partnership with FAA's employees and support tens of thousands of high-paying, leading-edge technology jobs in the U.S.

In particular, the Modern Skies Coalition believes a Common Automation Platform (CAP) for air traffic controllers should be a top priority for the BNATCS modernization effort and additional federal investment. Currently, controllers must rely on different automation surveillance platforms depending on the airspace, and the FAA has spent hundreds of millions for required "refreshes" of these foundational yet aging systems that were developed decades ago. Replacing the FAA's current en route, terminal, and oceanic procedures automation systems used to separate and sequence aircraft into a single modern platform would allow controllers to more efficiently and safely manage air traffic, reduce training costs and increase operational flexibility, and result in major benefits for the NAS. Current estimates suggest approximately \$10 billion is required to bring CAP to fruition.

Part of the early success of BNATCS, in our view, is the result of increased engagement by DOT and FAA with a broad cross-section of aviation stakeholders. We believe that deeper collaboration with Congress, industry, labor groups representing the frontline aviation workforce and other key stakeholders will continue to pay dividends. The Modern Skies Coalition has also pushed for additional transparency, and we are pleased that the FAA developed and released a publicly available BNATCS "dashboard" on its website. This allows stakeholders, Members of Congress and the public at large to have a much clearer picture of the FAA's progress and plans.

Finally, active and engaged Congressional oversight has been—and will continue to be—a crucial component in any successful, multi-year BNATCS program. If we are to avoid the problems and pitfalls of past ATC modernization efforts, Congress must continue to provide robust oversight on the status of various BNATCS initiatives to ensure accountability and acceptable performance.

Our nation's aviation system is a key national asset, but it is under increasing strain. Our nation cannot afford a half-effort that does not result in the state-of-the-art ATC system that is required to keep our skies safe, our economy moving and preserve American aviation leadership. We appreciate your bipartisan approach to this critical issue and respectfully urge you to provide additional resources to build on this progress and fully modernize our ATC system.

*Aeronautical Repair Station Association
Aerospace Industries Association
Affordable Skies
Airline Passenger Experience Association
Air Line Pilots Association, International
Air Medical Operators Association
Airbus
Aircraft Electronics Association
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
Air Traffic Control Association
Airlines for America
Airports Council International – North America
Allied Pilots Association
Alpha Eta Rho
American Association of Airport Executives
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
American Society of Travel Advisors
Association of Air Medical Services
Association of Flight Attendants-CWA
Association of Value Airlines
Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International
Aviation Innovation Coalition
Aviation Technical Education Council
Cargo Airline Association
Coalition of Airline Pilots Association
Corporate Aircraft Association
Digital Tower Technology Coalition
Experimental Aircraft Association
GE Aerospace
General Aviation Manufacturers Association*

*Global Business Travel Association
International Aircraft Dealers Association
International Air Transport Association
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
International Council of Air Shows
International Flight Services Association
National Air Carrier Association
National Air Traffic Controllers Association
National Air Transportation Association
National Aircraft Finance Association
National Association of State Aviation Officials
National Business Aviation Association
NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists, AFL-CIO
RTCA
Regional Air Cargo Carriers Association
Recreational Aviation Foundation
Regional Airline Association
Southwest Airlines Pilots Association
The Boeing Company
Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO
Travelers United
United States Parachute Association
United States Tour Operators Association
U.S. Contract Tower Association
U.S. Helicopter Safety Team
U.S. Travel Association
Vertical Aviation International*

cc: House Appropriations Chairman Tom Cole, House Appropriations Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro, House Transportation Chairman Sam Graves, House Transportation Ranking Member Rick Larsen, Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins, Senate Appropriations Vice Chair Patty Murray, Senate Commerce Chairman Ted Cruz, Senate Commerce Ranking Member Maria Cantwell