

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 2, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy,

On behalf of the New York Democratic Congressional delegation, we respectfully request the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to promptly begin the formal study directed in the House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2026 Report.¹ The report calls on the FAA to work with airports, airlines, and other stakeholders to study how “intelligent approach” technologies could improve operations in heavily congested airspace and on crowded runways, and to develop options for putting these tools into practice.

The New York-area airspace is the most congested in the nation. In 2024, more than 142 million passengers traveled through the New York City region’s airports.² This airspace serves as the gateway to America and a central nerve center of the domestic air transportation system. When delays occur in this region, congestion and schedule disruptions quickly ripple across the country. As last spring’s air traffic control delays in Newark demonstrated, aging Air Traffic Control (ATC) systems in the New York region also pose an immediate risk to safety and reliability.³

With major events on the horizon, including America250, the 2026 FIFA World Cup, and the 2028 Olympic Games, the efficiency and dependability of New York’s airspace will be even more essential. The United States must be prepared to welcome the world, and that requires an airspace system capable of safely and efficiently managing sustained, elevated passenger volumes.

We appreciate the FAA’s commitment to modernizing the nation’s airspace and look forward to swift implementation now that a prime integrator is in place. To ensure that public investment delivers maximum public benefit, federal ATC modernization must focus first on the areas where improvements will have the greatest national impact. With its unmatched passenger volume and

¹ H.R. Rep. No. 119–212, at 28 (2025) (accompanying H.R. 4552, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026) (“Intelligent approach technologies”).

² Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Port Authority Reports Facility Volumes for December and Full-Year 2025, press release (Feb. 6, 2026).

³ <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/05/07/newark-air-traffic-control-strain-staffing-technology.html>

critical role in the broader aviation network, the New York region must be a top priority for modernization.

Accordingly, we urge the FAA to proceed without delay in launching the required ATC modernization study and to ensure the needs of the New York region are fully prioritized and addressed.

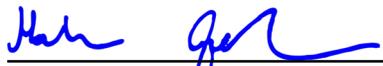
Sincerely,



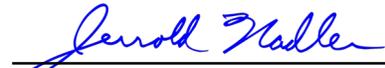
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Member of Congress



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



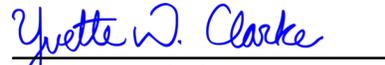
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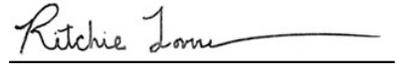
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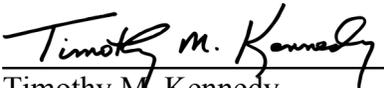
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