



State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

May 5, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy,

I write regarding the recent delays and disruption of service at Newark Liberty International Airport. These are caused by outdated technology infrastructure and air traffic controller staffing issues, and have impacted thousands of travelers in the region. I am deeply appreciative of your actions to "supercharge" the air traffic controller workforce and your visit last week to Philadelphia, and I look forward to helping you however I can.

Decades of underinvestment in the maintenance of critical air traffic control infrastructure, delays in upgrading to modern 21st century air traffic control technology, and inadequate air traffic control staffing have resulted in a frail system nationwide. To maintain the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) rigorous safety standards, air traffic control has had to compromise on efficiency in the system, which has a direct impact on system performance and drives delays at Newark and throughout airports in the United States. Since 2016, Newark's throughput rate has been reduced to 77 operations per hour from 81 operations per hour, despite billions of dollars in investments in terminal and airfield improvements.

Under the previous administration, FAA reduced service from airports in New Jersey and New York through October 25, 2025, citing a shortfall of air traffic controllers. Additionally, control of the Newark-area airspace was reassigned from New York's Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) to Philadelphia's facility, a transition that was intended to alleviate short staffing in New York and help flight delays. It is apparent neither effort has led to the desired outcome.

FAA has stated that American airspace is short 3,000 air traffic controllers and I appreciate your efforts to retain and hire additional controllers. As FAA works to address the yearslong shortfalls, I urge you to prioritize the region, the busiest airspace in the nation, by immediately addressing Philadelphia TRACON Area C staffing levels and developing a plan to

address chronic staffing shortages at New York TRACON. I would appreciate transparency as you work with the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) to develop targets and milestones on staffing and welcome outreach as the process moves forward.

As you work with Congress to fund additional investments in air traffic management systems, the New Jersey-New York region should be prioritized for technology and facility upgrades to help the more than 144 million passengers coming through Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) operated airports annually. We expect millions of additional passengers next year as we prepare to host the World Cup Finals and must avoid additional disruptions or strains on the system.

I thank you for your attention to these important matters. I stand ready to mobilize my fellow governors to advance your efforts to ensure the safety of travelers in our region's airports.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Phil Murphy", is written above the printed name.

Philip D. Murphy
Governor