

**Oversight of the Department of Transportation's Policies and Programs and Fiscal Year 2026
Budget Request Testimony of Secretary of Transportation
The Honorable Sean P. Duffy
Before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Wednesday, July 16, 2025**

Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and Members of the Committee – thank you for inviting me to testify before you today. My aim over the course of this hearing is to provide you a sense of how building big, beautiful infrastructure is at the top of the President's priorities, and how we can work together on this bipartisan effort.

I took office nearly six months ago, and in my first full day on the job we experienced a sobering reminder of why the Department's top priority is and must always be safety. The 67 lives lost by a mid-air collision of an Army helicopter and commercial flight over the Potomac was a stark reminder of what's at stake in our most fundamental mission. This tragic episode is also why the construction of a brand-new air traffic control system is at the top of our agenda as we get America building again.

In May, I unveiled a three-year plan to execute a complete overhaul of our outdated system. Let me be clear: flying remains safe. I fly all the time. I fly in and out of Newark all of the time, where recent glitches in our towers have exposed needs in our system. Our job is to keep air travel safe, which is why I have dedicated my tenure to delivering an all-new air traffic control system.

Today's skies are busier than ever. Drones, air taxis, and commercial spacecraft are all entering congested airspace managed by in some cases obsolete technology. Floppy disks, copper wire, and antiquated radar are piecing together an aging system overdue for something new. Under our plan, airports built in the days of propeller planes will be equipped with the latest fiber and satellite technology designed for jet-age airspace. The One Big Beautiful Bill passed by this chamber gives our Department a roughly \$12 billion dollar down payment to implement our state-of-the-art design.

Our Department has also moved swiftly to streamline the hiring process for new air traffic controllers. In May, we launched a spring initiative to supercharge our controller fleet with lucrative bonuses to controllers who delay retirement. We have already cut months off the hiring pipeline and are enrolling dozens into the FAA's prestigious academy this summer. These actions are critical to reaching the goal of hiring 2,500 new controllers in 2026.

Recent changes at Newark Liberty International Airport have demonstrated the effectiveness of our proposal to fix this aging system. After short outages spooked fliers and delayed travelers, we reinforced air safety with fiber optics, replaced outdated copper connections, and expedited construction of a new runway. We completed these overdue renovations in record time. As a result of our progress, Newark airport had its best June on time departure rate ever. Newark

airport also had the lowest cancel rate compared to JFK and LaGuardia. Our plan is to bring these changes nationwide.

This Committee has already begun its critical work on surface transportation reauthorization. The American people deserve the reliability of America's surface transportation network with impactful investments towards safety, efficiency, and innovation. The President is a builder. Together we can build big and beautiful and realize a golden age of transportation.

Our Department has been proud to lead under President Trump's historic first six months back in office. We are driving innovation forward transparently and efficiently while reducing red tape to unleash America's full potential.

This spring, I unveiled an automated vehicle framework delivering AV developers a single standardized set of guidelines for the safe deployment of this revolutionary technology. This framework prevents innovators from having to navigate a complex patchwork of 50 different sets of rules from 50 states. We unlock what's possible when American ingenuity drives the future.

Our Department has also cleared more than a third of the Biden-Buttigieg backlog of 3,200 grant projects. These are the projects that were announced under the previous administration but never received funding. Many of these projects dated back years. Some were announced as far back as 2022. As part of President Trump's ambitious plan to make America build again, we've ripped up red tape delays and are ensuring taxpayer dollars are being spent towards actual infrastructure.

What I've laid out is only just the beginning. Revitalizing American infrastructure is at the heart of this administration's historic agenda. America's ability to move goods and people freely, safely, and quickly has always been a hallmark competitive advantage. I look forward to hearing from you how we can work together on developing our infrastructure.