

NACA

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Impacts of 2024 Elections

Republican control of the White House and Congress in 2025 will have significant impacts on aviation policy and key personnel in the administration and on the Hill. President-elect Trump has nominated former Rep. Sean Duffy (R-Wisc.) to be the next Secretary of Transportation. With Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk playing a prominent role on the transition team and with personnel decisions, FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker may well resign over differences with Musk on commercial space launch licensing procedures and policies.

Senator John Thune (R-S.D.) will succeed Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) as Majority Leader, while Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) is expected to become chair of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, with Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) chairing the Aviation Subcommittee. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) will be ranking member of the full committee. On the House side, several senior committee members are vying to succeed Congressman Graves as House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chair, including Reps. Rick Crawford (R-Ariz.) and David Rouzer (R-N.C.). The House GOP Steering Committee will be interviewing candidates following the Thanksgiving recess. Current Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-Wash.) and Aviation Subcommittee Ranking Member Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.) are expected to remain in their current positions.

Based on the aviation policies of the first Trump administration and the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 White House policy blueprint prepared by several former Trump officials, we expect a 180-degree shift with respect to regulatory policy, including resumption of the two-for-one policy requiring repeal of two existing rules before promulgation of a new rule. Proposed airline mergers and joint ventures likely will receive less vigorous antitrust scrutiny from DOJ and DOT, and Project 2025 called for repeal of the 1,500-hour threshold for an ATP certificate. In addition, any transportation guidance issued by the Biden Administration prior to Inauguration Day will likely be revised or rescinded by the incoming DOT/FAA policy teams. We expect the Trump Administration to begin working on several aviation deregulatory initiatives, including the repeal of most of the Biden Administration's airline consumer rules, and possibly separating the Air Traffic Organization from the FAA to establish an independent, not-for-profit private organization managed by aviation stakeholders along the lines of NAV CANADA.

Expansion of Cargo Security Directive

TSA is looking to expand a cargo Security Directive issued in August that primarily impacted express cargo carriers in Europe. The directive would be expanded worldwide and could have impacts beyond express carriers. We expect TSA to share drafts of the language in the coming weeks and NACA will work with our cargo members to provide feedback on the proposed directive.

Industry/TSA Inspector Panel

TSA has agreed to have TSA inspectors meet with representatives from the major airline trade associations in a panel format, most likely at TSA headquarters in the first half of next year. We will continue to work with TSA staff to refine details and participants from the associations.

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CDC Extends Waiver

CDC has extended provisional waivers from the Air Way Bill (AWB) requirement for passenger carriers moving dogs from international locations into the United States to February 1, 2025. NACA raised our top concerns to CDC in October, including that the AWB requirement has proven to be unworkable for nearly all carriers and defining the role of air carriers in meeting the regulations with respect to military family dogs as well as working military dogs. CDC has agreed to monthly calls to work with industry on potential solutions for these issues over the coming months.

On-Demand Cargo Amendment

TSA is conducting special emphasis assessments on a highly-utilized "On-Demand" amendment used by many NACA cargo carriers to meet an International Civil Aviation Organization requirement for secure supply chains. Given the importance of this amendment to the operations of our carriers, we are requesting the amendment either remain in place as an amendment – or be added to the Full All Cargo Operator Standard Security Program (FACOSSP) – to ensure operational flexibility for the cargo carrier industry. TSA is considering moving this amendment into the FACOSSP sometime early next year.

Aviation Safety Team (AST) Industry Co-chair Selected

Because of the number of candidates for AST Industry Co-chair, a blind vote among the fourteen industry representatives was held to fill the position. Chris Collins from Delta Airlines was selected to a term beginning January 1. He attended the October AST meeting as an observer and has reached out to NACA and others for input on our priorities.

Wall Street Journal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request

Andrew Tangel of the *Wall Street Journal* filed a FOIA request to the FAA specifically asking for information on the Commercial Aviation Safety Team (CAST), Infoshare and ASIAs. The heavily redacted FAA response included material sent for meetings and agendas for CAST, ASIAs and Infoshare meetings. Industry names, topics, and presentations were removed, but FAA staff names were included in the response. One CAST meeting in August of 2022 listed NACA as the host.

NACA Operations, Safety and Maintenance Council meeting

NACA's Operations, Safety and Maintenance Councils met jointly with executive level participants from FAA on October 23. The discussion and exchange were well received by both in person and online attendees. The schedule for 2025 council meetings was set and distributed to all council members.

The Human Organ Transport Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC)

The Human Organ Transport ARC has met several times and has been divided into subgroups. The sub-groups are making good progress in identifying the infrastructure and communications roles needed to ensure the transportation of critical organs occurs smoothly.

Flight Deck Secondary Barrier Retrofit Rule ARC

The Flight Deck Secondary Barrier Retrofit Rule ARC met and divided into sub-groups including the Technical Group, the Operations and Training Group, and the Cost and Benefits Group. NACA joined the Cost and Benefits Group. Requiring retrofits was discussed and rejected during the original ARC.

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Infoshare 2024

Infoshare 2024 was held in Kanas City November 13-15, with more than 1,600 registrations and approximately 1,200 attendees. FAA Administrator Michael Whitaker delivered the keynote address during the plenary session. Organizers expanded the round table process to encourage more detailed discussions. This change shifts the focus from 15–30-minute presentations with larger audiences to 1-to-4-hour sessions with smaller groups. NACA hosted the four-hour cargo session featuring several industry presentations on how they conduct Safety Risk Assessments. FAA's Flight Standards Division has a new co-chair, though they did not present any updates during the cargo session. FAA's Hazardous Material Division provided an update. George Paul and Dan Stohr represented NACA at Infoshare.

Controller Staffing

The FAA hit its goal of hiring 1,800 air traffic controllers during FY2024 in September, which is a promising start. They have not yet released figures on the number of retirees lost nor the number of Certified Professional Controllers (CPCs) gained throughout the year. The net gain from September 2022-September 2023 was only 15 CPCs. Along with the restructuring of air space in the New York area, this situation led to significant staffing-related delays in the New York Metro Area, specifically at Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR). The Air Traffic Control System Command Center has acknowledged the issue and is seeking solutions to avoid delays during the winter and holiday season.

National Weather Service Interagency Agreement

In late September 2024, the FAA directed the National Weather Service (NWS) to decrease staffing by one person at the command center and at most of the Center Weather Service Units, reducing their staffing hours to 5:15 AM- 7:30 PM. FAA then notified that they would be terminating NWS's interagency agreement in April 2025. After a week, the notice was revised, but only extended the NWS contract into September 2025. While there has been no lapse in service to date, it is something NACA will continue to monitor.

Thanksgiving Routes

The Command Center already has disseminated their Thanksgiving routes to dispatch and operations teams. Instead of distributing full legacy spreadsheets, the plan is to issue a color-coded matrix indicating airspace availabilities seven days prior to the start of each holiday, including the Christmas, New Years, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and Presidents Day phases of the upcoming holiday season.

Monday ULCC Weekly Call

We've scheduled a weekly call on Mondays at 12pm EST for ULCC operational and dispatcher staff to discuss the prior and coming weeks' traffic, weather, and any other pertinent information needed to maintain positive control. This call also gives our member ULCCs the chance to collaborate with NACA in a more private forum and is open to anyone members think could have operational takeaways. We have helped resolve multiple operational issues and kept an open dialogue between NACA and air carrier members. Attendance from all ULCC's is highly encouraged; call times range from 10-20 minutes, depending on operational necessity.

