



**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

Assistant Secretary for
Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

March 17, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

Given your stated interest in staffing at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), including any impacts on staffing from the Office of Personnel Management's Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) and recent termination of some probationary employees, we write to provide you with that information.

As a threshold matter, we share your commitment to safety. Safety is the Department's highest priority, and we took important steps to ensure that any staffing reductions would not adversely impact DOT's safety mission. To that end, critical safety personnel were excluded from participation in the DRP. They also were exempt from the recent terminations.

The exempt or excluded personnel include employees working in the following positions, listed by DOT Operating Administration:

- *The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)*: Air Traffic Controllers, Aviation Safety Inspectors, Airway Transportation Systems Specialists, Accident Investigators, Certification Engineers, and National Airspace Technicians.
- *The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)*: Motor Carrier Safety Specialists.
- *The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)*: Railroad Safety Inspectors.
- *The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (GLS)*: All positions which ultimately support the maintenance and operations of the Seaway locks.
- *The Maritime Administration (MARAD)*: Positions supporting the National Defense Reserve Fleet and U.S. Merchant Marine Academy staff.
- *Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST)*: The Protective Service Detail, Intelligence Specialists, and Operations/Emergency Specialists.
- *The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)*: All non-supervisory Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Inspectors and Investigators.
- *All of DOT*: Information technology employees performing cybersecurity work.

Among probationary employees, additional categories were exempt from the recent terminations, including those who had completed a probationary period under a different appointment, military spouses, Presidential Management Fellows, and employees in other positions where DOT leadership approved exemptions proposed by DOT operating administrations in the interest of public safety or national security.

Under the previous administration, the Department grew by approximately 2,800 employees, or more than 5 percent. Recently, out of the Department's more than 57,000 employees, 1,102—less than 2 percent—accepted the DRP offer. The following are the numbers of DOT employees in each DOT operating administration who accepted the DRP offer as of March 12, 2025: FAA-704; FHWA-169; FMCSA-33; FRA-27; FTA-24; GLS-1; MARAD-13; NHTSA-27; Office of Inspector General (OIG)-21; OST-63; and PHMSA-20.

The following are the numbers of probationary employees who, as of March 13, 2025, were the subject of terminations in each DOT operating administration, totaling 788: FAA-340; FHWA-134; FMCSA-26; FRA-40; FTA-80; GLS-1; MARAD-4; NHTSA-33; OIG-1; OST-104; and PHMSA-25. DOT is aware of the order issued on March 13 by the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland in *Maryland v. USDA*, No. 25-cv-748, and it is complying with that order.

The Department will continue its important work across all modes of transportation, serving the Nation and placing the highest emphasis on safety. As just one example, the Secretary recently announced a plan to “supercharge” the hiring of air traffic controllers through a streamlined hiring process, salary increases, and other measures. Information on the Department's continuing work to improve safety across all modes of transportation is available online at <https://www.transportation.gov/priorities/safety>. In its safety work and all its work, the Department values its employees' contributions, and we will continue to serve the American people.

If you require further information, please contact the Department's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs, Hannah Matesic, at (202) 366-4573 or via email at hannah.matesic@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anne Byrd".

Dr. Anne Byrd
Assistant Secretary for Administration