



North Dakota Aeronautics Commission

**Assessment of the Impacts of the 2025 Federal Government Shutdown on
North Dakota's Commercial Service Airports**

Introduction

The North Dakota Aeronautics Commission prepared this briefing to deliver a clear, data-driven assessment of how the 2025 federal government shutdown affected commercial airline operations across the state. The shutdown began on October 1st, 2025, and its early weeks brought minimal measurable impacts to North Dakota's aviation system. Of the nearly 1,800 scheduled airline departures statewide in October, only one flight was canceled—and that cancellation was unrelated to the shutdown.

Elevated disruptions began to emerge beginning November 7th, when the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) instituted nationwide airspace capacity limits at 40 major hub airports due to air traffic controller staffing constraints.

Under the FAA's emergency order, required reductions in scheduled domestic operations into the nation's busiest 40 hub airports progressed as follows:

- November 7–10: 4% capacity reduction
- November 11–14: 6% capacity reduction
- November 15–16: 3% capacity reduction
- November 17: All capacity restrictions lifted, and normal operations resumed

North Dakota's commercial service airports experienced a noticeable increase in flight cancellations and delays following implementation of these restrictions. The disruptions resulted directly from reduced air traffic capacity at the affected hub airports, which required airlines to scale back scheduled operations nationwide and created downstream impacts on connecting routes to and from North Dakota.

Although the federal government shutdown formally ended on November 12th, a lag persisted between the restoration of federal appropriations and the FAA's ability to return to normal operations. This delay stemmed from the time required to rebuild staffing levels and phase out contingency procedures. Had the shutdown extended beyond November 12th, planned capacity restrictions were set to increase to 10% by November 14th, with additional reductions under consideration.

This briefing reviews airline activity from November 7 through November 20, 2025, to quantify the extent of these impacts on North Dakota's travelers, airports, and communities. Its intent is to provide state and local leaders, aviation stakeholders, and the public with a transparent, factual account of how national aviation system disruptions can cascade through a rural, connection-dependent air transportation network.

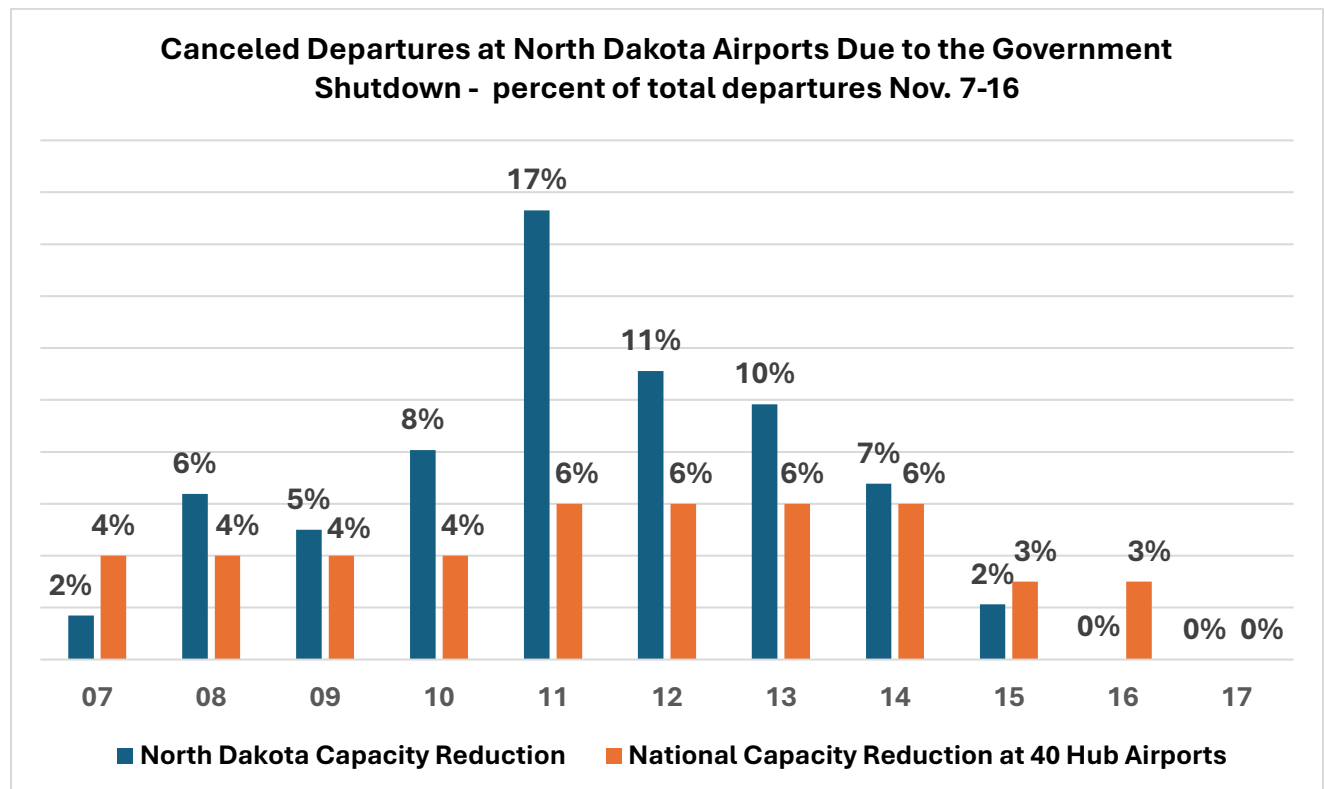
Statewide Impacts to ND Commercial Service Airports (Nov. 7th – 20th, 2025)

Across the 14-day reporting period of November 7th – 20th, North Dakota's eight commercial service airports experienced measurable operational impacts directly attributable to the federal government shutdown. A full breakdown of the statewide impacts as reported by each commercial service airport can be found on the following page.

Statewide totals for the 14 day period include:

- **Total Scheduled Airline Departures:** 757
- **Total Cancellations:** 41
- **Cancellations Attributed to the Shutdown:** 38 (93% of total cancellations)
- **Delays Attributed to Shutdown-Related Federal Staffing Constraints:** 19

The most significant impacts occurred during the seven-day period of November 8th–14th, when statewide capacity reductions ranged between 5% and 17%. North Dakota's disruption rate also exceeded the national capacity reduction on 7 of the 10 days during which FAA restrictions were in effect—demonstrating that reduced access to major hubs can disproportionately affect rural states that are reliant on connecting flights.



Statewide – All Eight ND Commercial Service Airports

Airline Departure Data from November 7th – 20th

Daily Flight Information

	Total number of scheduled airline departures	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of cancellations that were attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of delays that were attributed to the federal government shutdown	ND Capacity Reduction Impact Due to Government Shutdown	National Capacity Reduction at 40 Hub Airports
11/7	59	1	1	0	2%	4%
11/8	47	3	3	1	6%	4%
11/9	60	4	3	3	5%	4%
11/10	62	6	5	1	8%	4%
11/11	52	9	9	2	17%	6%
11/12	54	6	6	1	11%	6%
11/13	61	6	6	1	10%	6%
11/14	59	4	4	1	7%	6%
11/15	47	1	1	2	2%	3%
11/16	60	0	0	1	0%	3%
11/17	62	0	0	4	0%	0%
11/18	51	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/19	55	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/20	60	1	0	2	0%	0%

	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of cancellations that were attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of delays that were attributed to the federal government shutdown
Total Shutdown Impact	41	38	19

Individual Airport Observations

Shutdown impacts were concentrated at the state's five primary commercial service airports as shown in the table below.

Statewide – All Eight ND Commercial Service Airports

Airline Departure Data from November 7th – 20th

Cumulative Total Over Time Period

	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of cancellations that were attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of delays that were attributed to the federal government shutdown
Fargo	14	11	0
Bismarck	6	6	3
Minot	10	10	0
Grand Forks	5	5	0
Williston	6	6	16
Dickinson	0	0	0
Jamestown	0	0	0
Devils Lake	0	0	0
Total	41	38	19

North Dakota's Essential Air Service (EAS) airports—Dickinson, Jamestown, and Devils Lake—reported no shutdown-related cancellations or delays.

Summary and Key Findings

While North Dakota's aviation system remained safe and operational throughout the shutdown, the data clearly shows that FAA staffing shortages and resulting national capacity limitations within the airspace at major hub airports can have a substantial effect on airline schedule reliability. Key findings include:

- **Flight cancellations and delays:** Cancellations were concentrated at Fargo, Minot, Grand Forks, Bismarck, and Williston. Delays were particularly pronounced at Williston, where limited daily service made travelers more susceptible to network ripple effects from major hubs.
- **Suppressed demand and operational uncertainty:** Some passengers canceled travel preemptively or avoided airports due to unpredictable service, while missed connections, full flights on alternate days, and other network disruptions further limited travel options.
- **Passenger volumes:** Based on year-over-year growth and seasonal trends, statewide November 2025 passenger activity was expected to total approximately 105,000–107,000 enplanements. Actual enplanements for the month totaled 101,211, indicating an estimated loss of 4,000–6,000 passengers throughout North Dakota due to the extended shutdown and associated airline cancellations.
- **Airport revenue losses:** Affected airports reported reductions in concession sales, parking activity, and rental car transactions due to flight cancellations.
- **Minimal or no impact on Essential Air Service (EAS) communities:** Operations in Dickinson, Jamestown, and Devils Lake remained stable throughout the period.
- **Disproportionate impact on North Dakota:** Overall, the state experienced greater relative effects than the national average. Reductions at major hubs (e.g., MSP and DEN) created challenges for rural, connection-dependent regions. During the restrictions, airlines prioritized mainline hub-to-hub operations and frequently reduced service from spoke airports, including those in North Dakota, to preserve operations within the constrained national airspace system.

These insights reinforce the critical importance of adequate federal aviation staffing, robust air traffic system resilience, and clear continuity-of-operations planning. The shutdown demonstrated how quickly disruptions at major national hubs can extend outward, affecting rural communities and limiting mobility for residents, businesses, and essential travelers.

Overall, this report provides an objective foundation for continued coordination with federal partners and supports ongoing efforts to strengthen aviation system reliability within the national airspace system.

INDIVIDUAL AIRPORT REPORTS

Fargo – Hector International Airport (FAR)

	Total number of scheduled airline departures	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of airline departure cancellations that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of airline departure delays that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Airline Flight Capacity Reduction Impact Due to Government Shutdown	National Capacity Reduction at 40 Hub Airports
11/7	22	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/8	18	2	2	0	11%	4%
11/9	23	2	1	0	4%	4%
11/10	22	3	2	0	9%	4%
11/11	19	1	1	0	5%	6%
11/12	17	1	1	0	6%	6%
11/13	21	3	3	0	14%	6%
11/14	22	1	1	0	5%	6%
11/15	18	0	0	0	0%	3%
11/16	23	0	0	0	0%	3%
11/17	22	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/18	18	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/19	17	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/20	20	1	0	0	0%	0%

	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of cancellations that were attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of delays that were attributed to the federal government shutdown
Total Shutdown Impact	14	11	0

Bismarck Municipal Airport - BIS

	Total number of scheduled airline departures	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of airline departure cancellations that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of airline departure delays that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Airline Flight Capacity Reduction Impact Due to Government Shutdown	National Capacity Reduction at 40 Hub Airports
11/7	13	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/8	11	1	1	1	9%	4%
11/9	13	0	0	2	0%	4%
11/10	13	1	1	0	8%	4%
11/11	12	3	3	0	25%	6%
11/12	13	1	1	0	8%	6%
11/13	13	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/14	13	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/15	11	0	0	0	0%	3%
11/16	13	0	0	0	0%	3%
11/17	13	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/18	12	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/19	13	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/20	13	0	0	0	0%	0%

	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of cancellations that were attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of delays that were attributed to the federal government shutdown
Total Shutdown Impact	6	6	3

Minot International Airport - MOT

	Total number of scheduled airline departures	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of airline departure cancellations that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of airline departure delays that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Airline Flight Capacity Reduction Impact Due to Government Shutdown	National Capacity Reduction at 40 Hub Airports
11/7	8	1	1	0	13%	4%
11/8	5	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/9	7	1	1	0	14%	4%
11/10	10	1	1	0	10%	4%
11/11	7	2	2	0	29%	6%
11/12	7	2	2	0	29%	6%
11/13	9	1	1	0	11%	6%
11/14	8	1	1	0	13%	6%
11/15	5	1	1	0	20%	3%
11/16	7	0	0	0	0%	3%
11/17	10	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/18	7	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/19	8	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/20	9	0	0	0	0%	0%

	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of cancellations that were attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of delays that were attributed to the federal government shutdown
Total Shutdown Impact	10	10	0

Williston Basin International Airport - XWA

	Total number of scheduled airline departures	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of airline departure cancellations that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of airline departure delays that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Airline Flight Capacity Reduction Impact Due to Government Shutdown	National Capacity Reduction at 40 Hub Airports
11/7	7	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/8	5	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/9	7	1	1	1	14%	4%
11/10	8	1	1	1	13%	4%
11/11	7	2	2	2	29%	6%
11/12	7	1	1	1	14%	6%
11/13	8	1	1	1	13%	6%
11/14	7	0	0	1	0%	6%
11/15	5	0	0	2	0%	3%
11/16	7	0	0	1	0%	3%
11/17	8	0	0	4	0%	0%
11/18	7	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/19	7	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/20	8	0	0	2	0%	0%

	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of cancellations that were attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of delays that were attributed to the federal government shutdown
Total Shutdown Impact	6	6	16*

* A majority of the departing airlines were delayed in receiving IFR clearances due to impacts of the government shutdown.

Grand Forks International Airport - GFK

	Total number of scheduled airline departures	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of airline departure cancellations that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of airline departure delays that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Airline Flight Capacity Reduction Impact Due to Government Shutdown	National Capacity Reduction at 40 Hub Airports
11/7	3	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/8	4	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/9	4	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/10	3	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/11	3	1	1	0	33%	6%
11/12	4	1	1	0	25%	6%
11/13	4	1	1	0	25%	6%
11/14	3	2	2	0	67%	6%
11/15	4	0	0	0	0%	3%
11/16	4	0	0	0	0%	3%
11/17	3	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/18	3	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/19	4	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/20	4	0	0	0	0%	0%

	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of cancellations that were attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of delays that were attributed to the federal government shutdown
Total Shutdown Impact	5	5	0

Dickinson - Theodore Roosevelt Regional Airport - DIK

	Total number of scheduled airline departures	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of airline departure cancellations that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of airline departure delays that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Airline Flight Capacity Reduction Impact Due to Government Shutdown	National Capacity Reduction at 40 Hub Airports
11/7	2	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/8	2	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/9	2	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/10	2	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/11	2	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/12	2	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/13	2	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/14	2	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/15	2	0	0	0	0%	3%
11/16	2	0	0	0	0%	3%
11/17	2	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/18	2	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/19	2	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/20	2	0	0	0	0%	0%

	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of cancellations that were attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of delays that were attributed to the federal government shutdown
Total Shutdown Impact	0	0	0

Jamestown Municipal Airport - JMS

	Total number of scheduled airline departures	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of airline departure cancellations that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of airline departure delays that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Airline Flight Capacity Reduction Impact Due to Government Shutdown	National Capacity Reduction at 40 Hub Airports
11/7	2	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/8	1	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/9	2	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/10	2	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/11	1	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/12	2	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/13	2	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/14	2	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/15	1	0	0	0	0%	3%
11/16	2	0	0	0	0%	3%
11/17	2	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/18	1	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/19	2	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/20	2	0	0	0	0%	0%

	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of cancellations that were attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of delays that were attributed to the federal government shutdown
Total Shutdown Impact	0	0	0

Devils Lake Regional Airport - DVL

	Total number of scheduled airline departures	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of airline departure cancellations that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of airline departure delays that are attributed to the federal government shutdown	Airline Flight Capacity Reduction Impact Due to Government Shutdown	National Capacity Reduction at 40 Hub Airports
11/7	2	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/8	1	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/9	2	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/10	2	0	0	0	0%	4%
11/11	1	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/12	2	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/13	2	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/14	2	0	0	0	0%	6%
11/15	1	0	0	0	0%	3%
11/16	2	0	0	0	0%	3%
11/17	2	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/18	1	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/19	2	0	0	0	0%	0%
11/20	2	0	0	0	0%	0%

	Total number of airline departure cancellations	Total number of cancellations that were attributed to the federal government shutdown	Total number of delays that were attributed to the federal government shutdown
Total Shutdown Impact	0	0	0