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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Office of the Secretary

14 CFR Part 234

[Docket No. DOT–OST–2026–1257]

RIN 2105–AF29

Cause of Airline Delay and Cancellation Categories under Section 511(b) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024; Delay of Effective Date

AGENCY: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology, U.S. Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Final rule; delay of effective date.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Transportation (Department or DOT) is delaying the effective date of its September 3, 2026 final rule, titled "Cause of Airline Delay and Cancellation Categories under Section 511(b) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024," until February 1, 2027.

DATES: The effective date of the final rule published on September 3, 2026 (91 FR 56588) is delayed until February 1, 2027.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Nazareth, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20590, 202-934-2413, robert.nazareth@dot.gov (e-mail). You may also contact Blane Workie, Office of Aviation Consumer Protection, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20590, 202-366-9342 (phone), 202-366-7152 (fax), blane.workie@dot.gov (e-mail).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Delay of Effective Date

On September 3, 2026, the Department published a final rule with an effective date of October 19, 2026 to implement the requirements of Section 511(b) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024. That final rule amended an existing Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) reporting regulation at 14 CFR 234.4. Under 14 CFR 234.4, reporting carriers must file a report of the causes of reportable flight cancellations and delays within 15 days of the end of the month for which data are reported.[1]

The September 2026 final rule mandated that ten specific types of events be excluded from the BTS "Air Carrier" causal code for carriers to report delays and cancellations, consistent with statutory requirements. The air carrier code is reserved for circumstances that are within the carrier's control. The final rule created a new reporting category to capture these 10 specific events, ensuring that the data reported to the Department and shared with the traveling public accurately reflects the statutory distinction between carrier-controllable events and the specific exclusions identified by Congress. In the final rule, the Department explained that the rule would require revisions to a BTS information collection under OMB Control No. 2138-0041 and approval by OMB of those revisions.

On September 21, 2026, Airlines for America (A4A) requested that the Department extend the effective date of the final rule, which sets forth when airlines must report under the revised cancellation and delay causal reporting categories, to February 1, 2027 so that the changes to reporting under the final rule would start for flights beginning January 1, 2027.[2] A4A explained that the requested delay of the effective date would provide necessary additional time for the Department to update the BTS technical reporting directive, which provides reporting

[1] *See* 14 CFR 234.5.

[2] Letter from A4A Chief Legal Officer to DOT General Counsel dated September 21, 2026, *available at* https://www.regulations.gov/document/DOT-OST-2026-1257-0001/comment.

instructions to carriers; for industry stakeholders to update their systems to ensure that the data is collected, reported, and ingested properly; and for BTS to update its own systems. A4A also stated that a new calendar year would be the "natural and logical" date for the Department to begin applying the updated categories.

For the reasons requested by A4A, the Department agrees that it is appropriate to delay the effective date of the final rule until February 1, 2027. In particular, the Department agrees that applying the reporting requirement to cancellations and delays starting with the new calendar year will provide clearer information for consumers and industry. In addition, the delayed effective date will provide the Department with additional time to obtain necessary approvals for the revised information collection under the Paperwork Reduction Act.

As noted previously, carriers must submit reports on the causes of flight cancellations and delays to BTS within 15 days of the end of the month for which data are reported. Accordingly, the delay of the effective date for the reporting requirement to February 1, 2027 will apply to the reporting of delays and cancellations of flights occurring on or after January 1, 2027. Airlines must file their reports with BTS for the entire month of January 2027 in a manner reflecting the changes in causal reporting described in the final rule.

Good Cause for This Final Rule

The Administrative Procedure Act provides an exception to its notice-and-comment rulemaking procedures when an agency for good cause finds that the requirement is impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest.[3] The Department's final rule titled "Cause of Airline Delay and Cancellation Categories under Section 511(b) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024" would be effective on October 19, 2026 absent a delay of the rule's effective date. DOT only recently became aware of air carriers' need to delay the final rule. There is not sufficient time to propose and seek comment on the delayed effective date

[3] 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B).

before the rule would have come into effect. Accordingly, notice-and-comment procedures are impracticable because they cannot be completed prior to the rule's scheduled effective date.

Signed in Washington, D.C.

Edward Strocko,
Acting Director, Bureau of Transportation Statistics

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