

**From:** [Gallas, Rebecca J](#)  
**To:** [Gallas, Rebecca J](#)  
**Cc:** [White, Julie A \(NCDOT\)](#); [Barthe, Bridgette M](#); [Kritzer, Jamie B](#)  
**Subject:** [Helene Update] Review and Gratitude  
**Date:** Monday, October 14, 2024 10:52:31 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
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Good morning NC Airports and Aviation partners-

As we enter the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of Helene response, I am writing to express our deepest gratitude for your unwavering support and dedication during this challenging time. Your collective efforts continue to be instrumental in connecting North Carolinians and ensuring safe and robust operations at airports and in the air.

Road access into western North Carolina continues to improve and western NC airports operations are starting to trend towards typical levels. Our partners and airports are monitoring operations and congestion to sunset safety strategies like Prior Permission Request lines (PPRs) and temporary Air Traffic Control Towers, as appropriate. We continue to update the Helene coordination website with best practices and where safety strategies are currently active: <https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/State-Airport-Aid/Pages/Helene.aspx>

As airports begin to return to normal operations, we are continuing to hear beautiful stories about the outpouring of support from aviation communities across the state and how airports have gone above and beyond to connect North Carolinians. At the Division of Aviation, we are working with our team at NC State ITRE to gather data about aircraft and airport operations and our communication team is documenting stories that illustrate the role of airports in Helene response via images and video interviews.

While we work to pull together comprehensive data analysis and storytelling of the role of Aviation in Helene response, I wanted to share a few of the things NC airports have supported during Helene response:

- Search and rescue operations
  - 517 people and 151 animals rescued via air by NC National Guard, with additional rescues conducted via private groups
- Supply delivery to cut off communities
  - Over 3.1 million pounds moved via air by NC National Guard
  - Unprecedented response and supply mobilization by private airdrop groups
- Fueling of air drop, search & rescue, emergency management, NC National Guard,

and other partners

- Including navigating disruption to fuel supply chain
- Accommodating and housing additional qualified airport staff from across the state and region who mobilized to support and relieve airport staff

If you are aware of any additional operational data that may be available, please let me know/share for our awareness.

Thank you again to airports and partners for your outstanding work and dedication. This group's support has made a significant difference, and we are truly grateful for your commitment to our airport community and western North Carolina.

Thanks,  
Becca

**Becca Gallas, P.E.**  
Director  
Division of Aviation  
North Carolina Department of Transportation

919 814 0573 – office  
984 327 7350 - cell

[RJGallas@ncdot.gov](mailto:RJGallas@ncdot.gov)

1050 Meridian Drive  
Morrisville, NC 27560

1560 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1560



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