

**BEFORE THE  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

_____	)	
Notice of	)	
	)	
MESABA AVIATION, INC.	)	
d/b/a MESABA AIRLINES	)	Docket OST-01-10642
	)	
of intent to terminate service at Thief River	)	
Falls, Minnesota pursuant to 49 U.S.C.	)	
§ 41734 and 14 C.F.R. § 323	)	
_____	)	

Dated: October 19, 2001

**ANSWER OF MESABA AVIATION, INC.  
D/B/A MESABA AIRLINES  
TO THIEF RIVER FALLS, MINNESOTA OBJECTION**

Mesaba Aviation, Inc. d/b/a Mesaba Airlines (“Mesaba”) hereby answers Thief River Falls, Minnesota’s (“TVF”) objection to Mesaba’s notice of termination of service. The Department received TVF’s objection on October 9, 2001 and docketed it on October 16, 2001. Mesaba’s termination notice, which was filed on September 17, 2001, notified the Department that on January 1, 2002, Mesaba intended to terminate 2 daily roundtrip flights between TVF and Minneapolis, via Bemidji.

In its objection, TVF requests that the Department not only require Mesaba to continue service, but also require Mesaba to increase that service above the basic essential air service level. TVF argues that traffic would have been higher in 2000 if Mesaba had operated 3 roundtrip flights each weekday throughout the year. TVF also questions whether Mesaba makes 50 percent of the seats on Mesaba’s one-stop service to/from TVF available to TVF passengers.

Mesaba appreciates TVF's need for additional service and agrees that 3 roundtrip flights each weekday might have increased traffic in the TVF-Minneapolis market. However, had 3 roundtrip flights been operated each weekday, substantially higher losses would have been incurred. Mesaba, moreover, is not aware of the Department permitting subsidies for service that exceeds the basic essential air service level.

DOT Order 85-5-132 requires that the EAS carrier must provide at least 2 roundtrip flights each weekday and over the weekend between TVF and Minneapolis. The maximum number of intermediate stops permitted is two. The Order also requires that for aircraft with 15 seats or more, the carrier must provide 18 passenger seats in each direction each service day. Mesaba has done what the Department requires.

If TVF feels strongly about increasing service, it should submit a petition for modification of the basic essential air service level, in accordance with Part 325 of the Department's Regulations. This proceeding is not the appropriate place to demand service above the required level, service that the Department may not subsidize.

As required by 14 C.F.R. § 323.7(a), this Answer is being served upon all persons listed on the attached service list.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Robert Weil /s/

Robert Weil  
Chief Financial Officer  
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Dated: October 19, 2001

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on this 19th day of October 2001, a copy of this ANSWER OF MESABA AVIATION, INC. D/B/A MESABA AIRLINES was served by first class mail, postage prepaid, upon each of the persons below:

Mr. Dennis DeVany, Director  
Chief, EAS and Domestic Analysis, X-53  
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/s/ Robert Weil /s/  
Robert Weil