

OSTL 2000-7857

February 27, 2001

Mr. Dennis DeVary
Essential Air Service Division
U. S. Department of Transportation
400 7th Street S. W.
Washington, D. C. 20590

Dear Mr. DeVary:

After reviewing the revised proposal from Corporate Airlines to provide service to Jackson, I wanted to express my concerns on the proposed service. First, two flights a day drastically limits travel options. Based on the schedule provided in Corporate's proposal, to meet the afternoon connection to get back to Jackson, you will need to be in STL no later than 4:00 p.m. This will require a business traveler to cut short their day or spend an extra night and wait for the morning flight. With only two flights limiting the business traveler's choice, there will be little if any incentive to use the service no matter what the price.

Second, without the business traveler it will be difficult for Corporate to meet their projected average passenger load per departure of 4.5. By my calculations, if that average drops just one point to 3.5, Corporate stands to lose around \$340,000 even with a subsidy. This will put them into the same situation that Northwest claims they are currently in. My question becomes how long will they last under these circumstances? We are currently enduring the service ramifications of an airline under this type of monetary pressure.

In my opinion the only possible way for service into Jackson to be successful is through the use of the current size aircraft or larger and with multiple departure times that would appeal to the business traveler. Taking a step back from what we have today will only erase what little progress has been made over the past five years. I strongly urge DOT to look for other possible replacements or they may be soon repeating the current process.

Thanks for your timely consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Elizer

It takes a great deal of experience to be a SAFE driver of Big Rigs. Please do not approve the reduction of the age for training Commercial Big Rig drivers to 18 years old. It would be better if you would raise the age to 25 years old instead. Big Rigs driven without the caution of an experienced older driver, can be a tremendous hazard on the highways. Please do not make the highways anymore dangerous than they already are by putting 18 year olds in the driver seats of Big Rigs.

I want to register strongly against approving this proposal for 18-20 year old drivers in big trucks. The level of maturity of today's youth that would be candidates for this, in my opinion, is too low. I have trouble with the maturity level of drivers I observe out there now. Even at 21 or older, the traffic news calls out a 'big rig' accident causing havoc on our freeways almost every day. In recent highway cross-country trips, I was appalled at the number and the skill-level I observed. Speeding was 'the rule' not the exception. Poor passing techniques and 'tailgating' was just plain dangerous. Even with the proposed 68 mph gear-limits on the trucks, a passenger car is no match for that when it's out of control. I also saw evidences of tired drivers in instances of observed erratic control. It underscored the fact that problems already exist ubiquitously in the current driver force.

It also concerns me that the TCA makes a point of desiring to interest 'disadvantaged' or 'at-risk' youth. These people would be somewhat likely to bring emotional problems that definitely WON'T be cured by a short training and supervised experience. I can imagine these behaviorally-challenged folks setting up intricate drug-delivery opportunities with the kind of access to the interstate transportation system proposed by the TCA.

As to the 80,000 driver-shortage projection, I can't see DOT tolerating even worse truck-crowding on our highway system than we are experiencing now. I'm waiting for a new, massive focus on expanding and improving the US rail system, especially for interstate commerce.

I don't want the nightmare of having any of my family killed by these under-aged, immature drivers. The statistics on under-30 truck drivers in accidents is twice that of over-30. That argues for an increase in the age and a heavier focus on work conditions and training.

As an ex-military pilot, I doubt that any of you or the TCA proposers would want to climb aboard a modern jetliner with an 18-20 year old captain.

Let's don't do this!! It's a dumb idea.

K.L. Atkins
La Crescenta, CA