



State of Utah

THE UTAH AIR TRAVEL COMMISSION

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November 13, 2002

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OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION

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Docket Operations and Media Management Division

SVC-124
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
Room PL 401
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington D.C. 20590

Re: Vernal, Utah EAS, Docket OST-1997-2706
Moab, Utah EAS, Docket OST-1997-2827

Office of the Secretary:

The Utah Air Travel Commission (UATC) is the official body designated by the State of Utah, the Salt Lake City Corporation, and the Salt Lake Area Chamber of Commerce to represent Utah's interest for improved air service.

For many years this commission has supported essential air service (EAS) to Moab and Vernal. We continue that support and trust your impending decision will be beneficial not only to Moab and Vernal, but also to Salt Lake City. In fact, the major problem with the present service by Great Lakes is that the service is to Denver, and not to Salt Lake City. The ties of both Moab and Vernal are to Salt Lake City and the communities west of the Rocky Mountains, and not to Denver and the communities east of the Rockies.

We are not finding fault with the U.S. DOT for selecting Great Lakes in its replacement of Sunrise Aviation, on the contrary, we are fully aware of the difficult circumstance you suddenly found yourself in. However, once again, the time has come to select a carrier that will serve Salt Lake City from both Moab and Vernal. Salmon Air has indicated its willingness to do that.

This commission has contacted officials from both Moab and Vernal, and each community has expressed a preference for Salt Lake City, though Salmon Air proposes to use the Cessna Caravan aircraft. The Caravan is a nine-passenger, single-engine, non-pressurized aircraft, however, its reliability has been proven throughout the world.

TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT AIR SERVICES AVAILABLE TO UTAH

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In addition to carrying passengers, the Caravan is used extensively as a cargo aircraft, which would not only accommodate the trail bike enthusiast, but also the bike. Incidentally, Moab and its slick, red rocks are becoming known as the "Trail Bike Capital of the World."


Salmon Air proposes to base one aircraft at Moab, and a second aircraft at Vernal. In this way, the first flight of the day will be from the EAS community to Salt Lake City, and thereby provide travelers a full business day in Salt Lake, as well as the opportunity to catch early connecting flights. Also, Salmon Air proposes to fly three, round-trips each day, and one, round-trip each week-end, with a two-pilot operation. Oxygen masks would be installed for emergency use.

Appendix B, *Order Requesting Proposals*, Order 2002-10-32, identifies the number of passengers at both Moab and Vernal are down, yet visitors to national parks are up. The downward passenger spiral can be attributed to several events, including: The terrorists attack of September 11, 2001, the Sunrise bankruptcy, and poor marketing of the service. In fact, poor marketing has been a common problem among the carriers because they have often not had sufficient time to promote and advertise the service. Sufficient lead time to market the service is not only critical to the domestic market, but it is absolutely essential to capitalize on the foreign market.

In addition to this commission, the Salt Lake City International Airport is very supportive of Salmon Air's proposal. They have even set aside funding to assist in the marketing of both communities.

It is our understanding, because the service would be provided with single-engine, non-pressurized aircraft, that a waiver will be required. We support the waiver, as we support Salmon Air's proposal.

Sincerely,



Scott Slaymaker
Chairman

cc: Tim Campbell, Director, Salt Lake City International Airport