

240404

OST-1997-2785
CIVIC PARTY COMMENTS

April 8, 2003

Dennis J. DeVany, Chief
U.S. Department of Transportation
EAS/Domestic Analysis Division X53
Room #64171
400 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20590

2003 APR 15 P 1:34

DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION
DOCKETS

RE: DOCKET OST-1997-2785 - 14
SERVED: March 25, 2003

Dear Mr. DeVany:

The Devils Lake Chamber of Commerce is very concerned with the discussions of reducing the flight schedule for our community. The actual boarding at our airport is the result of a number of factors identified by the Airport Authority in their letter on the issue and we concur.

The Airport Authority, Camp Grafton and the Chamber of Commerce as well as our Economic Development Organization (FORWARD Devils Lake) have consistently lobbied the existing carrier to address problems that are at the root cause of our lower than potential boarding. The service reliability problems have continued to the point of an erosion of confidants by our local travelers and the travel agents in our area. The proposed solution of reducing flights is exactly the wrong direction and is an indication of poor oversight by the Department of Transportation and the EAS Program and a lack of commitment to rural community's transportation needs after deregulation.

We have excellent potential for growth if a carrier would coordinate effectively with the needs of the National Guard, address their reliability problems and begin an ongoing marketing effort to increase boarding and repair their image. I believe the community of Devils Lake will be a willing partner in this effort but the contracts are overseen by the Department of Transportation and any review of the effectiveness of the EAS should begin with a review of your oversight policy with the carriers not by cutting service in our community.

Sincerely,



Randy Frost

Executive Vice President

DEVIL'S LAKE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE