

Jun 20, 2003 12:57AM

No. 9465 P. 1

Re:

Rutland
Economic
Development
Corporation

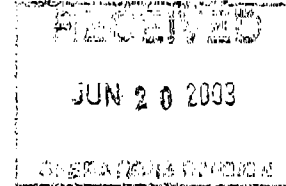
Correspondence

Docket 2784

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20590

JUN 20 2003

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Docket Operations and Media Management Division
M-30, Room PL-401
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Essential Air Service Program, Termination of Subsidy at Rutland
Docket OST-1997-2784 - 25

The Rutland Economic Development Corporation strongly supports the Rutland Airport and the air service it currently provides to the Region. We know you are aware of the importance of the air service to the Region's economy and based on a recent state study can quantify for you the current impact on the local community at \$7,554,398. While the air service provides the ability to connect with the rest of New England and the world, we also consider this a significant monetary impact on our economy.

Airports and the communities they serve directly affect the economic well being of each other, for good and for bad. Development of a strong tax base, the creation of jobs and increased corporate relocation are all affected by the quality of air service a community receives. In the Rutland Region, even with the September 11th drop in traffic, the airport and air service play a vital role in attracting new business and in providing medium to long-range tourist connections to the existing recreation industry in the region. As a consequence, the threat of losing air service is treated as a very serious problem by the entire community.

We understand that the Essential Air Service Program that subsidizes the current air service will essentially be terminated under the Order to Show Cause issued by the Department of Transportation recently. If the order is finalized, the airline will no doubt be lost to more lucrative communities. Although we would certainly prefer to see the airline operate unsubsidized, the current volatile state of the industry and the post 9/11 plummet in passenger traffic make that impossible at this time.

The gloomy prospect of losing service concerns us and we are asking that you help ensure this community's economic well being by either requesting proposals for new

Jun. 23. 2003 12:58PM

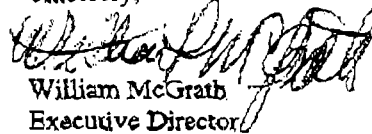
No. 9336 P. 2

Re:

service within statutory limits or extending our current carrier for a period that would allow a test of a concerted marketing effort - I consider consistent marketing with either the introduction of a new service or a continuation of our existing service the key to Rutland's air service success.

Before the large and possibly irreversible step of terminating air service is taken, I am asking that every consideration be given to a community whose traffic record before September 11th indicated success. If we lose our air service, we want to know with a certainty that the loss was unavoidable.

Sincerely,



William McGrath
Executive Director

Copies to: James Douglas, Governor, State of Vermont
James Jeffords, U.S. Senator
Patrick Leahy, U.S. Senator
Kevin Dorn, Secretary, Commerce and Community Development
John Cassarino, Mayor, Rutland City
Thomas Donahue, Executive Director, RRCC
Richard Baker, Chairman, RRTC
Pat McDonald, Secretary, VAOT
Senator Kevin Mullin
Representative David Allaire
Rich Turner, Vermont Aviation Program Manager
Thomas Trudeau, Rutland Airport Manager