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U.S. Department of Transportation
 Dockets Operations and Media Management
 400 7th Street S.W.
 Rm. PL-401
 Washington, DC 20590

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 DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response the Essential Air Service program. As you know, dependable air service in Grant County is vital to both the social and economic health of our community.

Any reduction in the EAS program would result in the current carrier - Mesa Air Lines - discontinuing its service to Grant County. The loss of service would negatively impact our local economy in many ways. Since the area has seen a significant shrinking of its economy as a result of the closure of the mines, it is unlikely that local governments could afford any additional strain upon their reduced tax revenues as a means to replace the EAS subsidies.

Mesa Airlines also provides transportation for physicians who come to our area to provide much needed services. Without these physicians traveling to Grant County, many patients will be required to leave the community, often at great cost, inconvenience and danger to their health. The lack of this physician coverage may cause patients to delay receiving necessary healthcare or to use our Emergency Department as a last resort to receive needed medical attention. This is a very poor use of resources as well as a danger to the health and well-being of the individual and the community.

Gila Regional Medical Center therefore strongly supports the continuance of the EAS program and its support of our local air carrier.

Sincerely,

John Rossfeld
 John Rossfeld
 CEO, Gila Regional Medical Center