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OST DKT 2005-20430-15

THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590 DOCKETS

OCT 21 2005

2005 NOV -2 P 12:56

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510-2003

~~BARBARA:~~  
~~Dear Senator Mikulski:~~

Thank you for your letter of March 21 supporting the application of Washington County, Maryland, seeking reinstatement of essential air service at Hagerstown Regional Airport and continuation of scheduled air service for the community.

As you know, on February 17, the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County filed a request for secretarial review of the U.S. Department of Transportation's finding in Order 2002-3-22 that Hagerstown is less than 70 highway miles from Dulles International Airport. Also on February 17, Air Midwest, the only carrier providing scheduled service at Hagerstown, filed a notice of its intent to terminate service. On April 15, the Department issued Order 2005-4-17 reinstating Hagerstown's subsidy eligibility, prohibiting Air Midwest from terminating its service, and requesting proposals from all air carriers interested in providing replacement air service for the community.

You will be pleased to know that on September 9, the Department issued Order 2005-9-10 selecting Air Midwest to provide subsidized essential air service at Hagerstown, consisting of three nonstop round-trips a day to Pittsburgh at an annual subsidy rate of \$649,929, through September 2007. For your convenience, I have enclosed a copy of the Department's decision.

As is our normal practice, I am placing a copy of your letter and my response in Docket OST-2005-20430 as a contact outside the record of this proceeding.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely yours,

Norman Y. Mineta

Enclosure



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND**  
Washington County Administration Building  
100 West Washington Street, Room 228  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740-4735  
Telephone: 240-313-2200  
FAX: 240-313-2201  
Deaf and Hard of Hearing call: 7-1-1 for Maryland Relay

Gregory I. Snook, *President*  
William J. Wivell, *Vice-President*  
James F. Kercheval  
John C. Munson  
Doris J. Nipps

February 18, 2005

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski  
United States Senator  
709 Senate Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-2003

Dear Senator Mikulski:

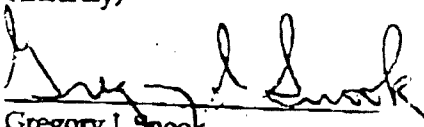
Washington County has requested that the Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), Norman Y. Mineta reinstate Essential Air Service (EAS) for Hagerstown Regional Airport

The Department of Transportation administers EAS. The program is designed to ensure that smaller communities will retain their vital link to the national air transportation system. Hagerstown had been established as an EAS market in 1978 with the Airline Deregulation Act. A "shortest distance" interpretation in 2003 using secondary and tertiary roads by USDOT caused the EAS status at Hagerstown to be tentatively terminated based on a calculation of the community's proximity to Dulles International ("the nearest Large or Medium Hub Airport").

USDOT now allows a "most commonly used route" measurement which when applied between Hagerstown city, and Washington Dulles International Airport coincides with EAS qualifying criteria.

With your support we are confident that Hagerstown's EAS status will be reinstated. Although Hagerstown has not called on the EAS program for financial assistance in the past, at this critical time it seems prudent and appropriate to pursue its support. Reinstatement of EAS would perpetuate the community's long-standing tradition of scheduled air service while providing a critical transportation link for the citizens and businesses of Western Maryland.

We request your prompt and positive action on this matter.

Sincerely,  
  
Gregory I. Snook  
President

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, OF  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND