



**DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE, AVIATION AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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Equal Opportunity Employer

June 19, 2006

Mr. Dennis DeVany
Chief, EAS & Domestic Analysis Division, X-53
Office of Aviation Analysis, Room 6401
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: DOT 2006-6-10, Docket OST-1998-3521
Order Prohibiting Termination Of Service and Requesting Proposals

Dear Mr. DeVany:

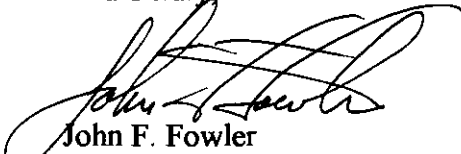
When the Department of Defense, through the Base Realignment and Closing Commission, closed Castle Air Force Base, the Airport Reuse Plan developed included passenger service. In August 2000, the County of Merced (the newly designated Local Reuse Authority for Castle) began an aggressive program to develop Castle as a commercial airport. Today, Castle Airport is about to gain Part 139 certification by the FAA and thus would be an ideal base for Essential Air Service to the Merced community.

Castle has a main runway of 11,800 feet, no encroachment at either end and no noise issues. The tower will be reactivated in September 2006 and the new passenger terminal will be ready for use in December 2006. There is a suitable interim terminal available while the new facility is being constructed. Castle is just 1.2 miles from Highway 99 (a main state highway) and about 6 miles from downtown Merced. Convenient parking is available near the terminal.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that Castle is in contact with prospective operators for Merced EAS and to inform other prospective operators of our interest in hosting commercial air service. We want to demonstrate to them the advantages offered by Castle Airport.

I would appreciate your confirmation that Castle Airport is eligible for the EAS subsidy for service to the Merced community. Thank you and please let us know what additional information you need on Castle Airport.

Yours truly,



John F. Fowler
Director