



CITY OF COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

OST-2006-23931

OBJECTION

OFFICE OF CITY MANAGER

February 8, 2008

Mr. Dennis DeVany, Chief
EAS and Domestic Analysis
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. DeVany:

This letter will put the City of Columbia on record in Docket OST-2006-23931 relating to Air Midwest, Inc.'s notice of termination of service and request for review under 49 U.S.C. §47133(E). We are aware of and appreciate the department's recent order extending the Air Midwest's service obligation and requesting EAS proposals from other carriers.

Columbia, Missouri, the community served by Columbia Regional Airport ("Airport"), objects to Air Midwest, Inc.'s ("Air Midwest") proposal to terminate service to the Airport effective April 20, 2008. Air Midwest's agreement to provide essential air service to the Airport expires in October 2008. We object on the grounds stated below.

- Air Midwest's flights to Kansas City International Airport are the only passenger air services provided, not only to Columbia, but to the larger mid-Missouri region. Losing even this most basic service leaves travelers with no option but to rely on ground transport to reach that important connection center.
- We have been working in good faith with Air Midwest to accommodate loss of passenger service to Lambert - St. Louis International Airport, to address local service disruptions and to enhance service offerings. Instead, our air transit future appears even more uncertain, a condition that seriously hampers our region's ability to attract business and commercial development that relies on convenient, commercial passenger service.
- Finally, we note that Air Midwest has filed similar notices-to-terminate in Joplin and Kirksville, Missouri and in other Midwestern communities depending on essential air service agreements. This puts our nation's vast geographic core at risk of losing economic vitality as public transit options diminish. As the costs of highway construction and gasoline continue to climb, we suggest that it is counter to the national interest to rely on road-only transportation.

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“Essential” air service is just that. We ask the U.S. Department of Transportation to either enforce the agreement we have with Air Midwest or assure that a viable company serves in its place until we negotiate a new agreement with another essential air service provider. We look forward to working with the Department of Transportation in the coming months.

Respectfully submitted,



Bill Watkins
City Manager

CC: Mayor Hindman
City Council Representatives Crayton, Janku, Skala, Wade, Nauser and Hoppe
Mary Ellen Lea
Kathy Frerking
John Glascock
Robert “B.J.” Hunter