

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 6, 2017

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) Appropriations legislation, we write to express our strong support for the Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Essential Air Service program. We request the committee include robust funding to support this important program that is vital to guarantee scheduled air service to small and remote communities across the country.

The USDOT's Essential Air Service program connects over 170 small communities in the United States to the National Air Transportation System, providing them an essential connection point for travel throughout the country. Without this program, these communities would lose air service as airlines would move to only serve more profitable markets. That would leave some communities hundreds of miles away from the nearest large- or medium-hub airport.

Communities in our states rely on the Essential Air Service program to sustain their local economies. Regular air service allows remote communities to access necessary medical services that might only be available in larger cities, as well as increase economic opportunity and attract visitors and new businesses. Any reduction in air service to these communities would likely reduce access to potentially life-saving medical services and decrease economic opportunity to already isolated areas.


As we work to support rural communities and economies across the nation, we hope that you will include strong funding for the Essential Air Service program, which has provided important air services to these communities for decades.

Thank you for your consideration of our request, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that small and remote communities across the country maintain their vital scheduled air service.

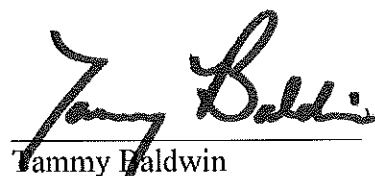
Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



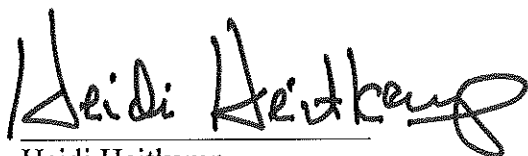
M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey Jr.
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



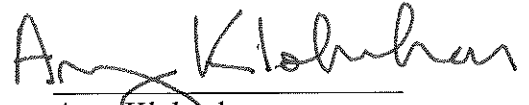
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



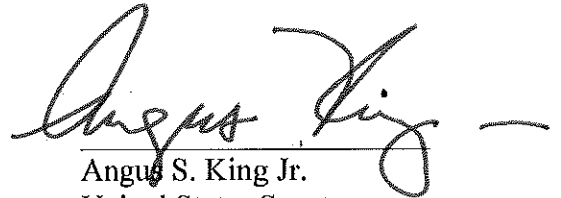
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



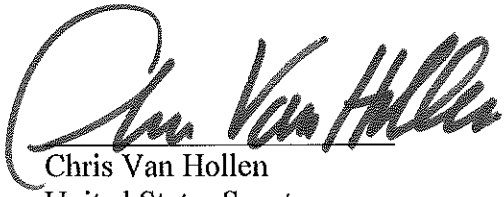
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Angus S. King Jr.
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator