



BLAIR COUNTY AIRPORT AUTHORITY

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Re: Request of Altoona-Blair County Airport for an extension of the deadline for submitting proposals to provide Essential Air Service at the Altoona-Blair County Airport, DOT Order 2020-2-14, Docket-DOT-OST-2002-11446

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Altoona-Blair County Airport (AOO), I first wanted to thank the US Department of Transportation for its support over the years as the Altoona community has relied upon the Essential Air Service subsidies to retain our access to the National Transportation System. On February 24, we received notification from the US DOT with Order 2020-2-14, that proposals are being accepted by DOT until March 24, 2020, to provide Essential Air Service at AOO.

The Altoona-Blair County Airport formally requests an extension of the bid deadline until April 24, 2020. As demonstrated in data previously submitted to DOT, AOO has seen significant increases in enplanements over the period covered by the current EAS agreement. We are now consistently meeting the 10 enplanement/day minimum, and we are making substantial progress toward meeting the \$200/passenger maximum subsidy level. Given the current extraordinary and uncertain situation in the airline industry, as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic, we believe that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for any airline to make an informed and reasoned bid on service for the next two years. The immediate future of air travel, and when it may return to normal, is just too uncertain. In fact, our concern is that with the current deadline, airlines may be forced to increase their bid amounts because they must plan for the worst-case scenario. We believe that the decisions made in the upcoming selection process will be crucial to continuing our growth, and in order to enable this process to proceed in a more informed way, we are requesting the above-referenced extension.

We appreciate your time and consideration in granting the requested extension of the deadline for proposals from March 24, 2020, to April 24, 2020, which will give interested airlines the opportunity to better evaluate the immediate future of air travel, and provide a more informed and competitive bid that will allow AOO the best opportunity to meet EAS cap goals and to continue to serve our community, as we have for 80 years.

Very Respectfully,

Tracy A. Plessinger, Manager
Altoona-Blair County Airport