



June 16, 2020

Mr. Michael Gormas  
United States Department of Transportation  
Office of Aviation Analysis  
1200 New Jersey Ave. S.E.  
Washington DC 20590

Dear Mr. Gormas:

I am writing on behalf of the Altoona Blair County Development (ABCD) Corporation, Blair County's Certified Economic Development Organization, in reference to the proposals received by DOT to provide Essential Air Service to the airport.

As we understand the decision, the Blair Count Airport Authority (BCAA) Board gave very serious consideration and discussion to the proposals of Boutique Air (BA), Cape Air (CA), and Southern Airways Express (SAE). The management team of each airline made an in-person presentation to the Board, as well as providing a tour of the proposed aircraft. After carefully considering the options presented in the above-referenced proposals, and ranking them in order of preference, we were informed that the BCAA recommends that EAS Service at AOO be provided by Boutique Air, with service provided to both Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT) and Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI).

Among the factors the BCAA Board considered were:

1. The Pilatus PC-12 aircraft, offered by BA, provides superior reliability to the Tecnam P-2012 Traveler, offered by CA, and the Cessna 208 Caravan, offered by SAE.
2. BA was selected by JST in the last round of EAS bids. As a result, BA has established a maintenance base at JST, which is located just one hour by ground transportation, from AOO.
3. BA offers a Code Share agreement with United Airlines, and an Interline Agreement with American Airlines.
4. BA offers a full-service car rental agency as a part of the service that it is proposing for AOO. Following just behind reliability, we have found availability of rental cars to be a primary influencer of decisions to use a local airport, especially for incoming business travelers.

While we were not directly involved in the evaluation leading to the BCAA decision, we fully support the BCAA Board and trust in the direction they are taking the airport service offerings.

ABCD Corporation joins in supporting their recommended request that Boutique Air be awarded the EAS contract for the Altoona-Blair County Airport, providing 26 weekly flights to Pittsburgh International Airport and Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen McKnight', with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

Stephen McKnight  
President and CEO  
Altoona Blair County Development Corporation