

July 6, 2020

Michael D. Gormas

United States Department of Transportation

Office of Aviation Analysis

1200 New Jersey Ave SE

Washington, DC 20590

202 366 1853

Dear Mr. Gomas,

We are writing this letter in support of Alaska Air Transit for the EAS contract for McGrath, Alaska.

My wife and I have lived in McGrath for over 50 years. We worked for Northern Consolidated Airlines when Teletype and HF radio were the communication resources for our villages. I worked for a school district based out of McGrath which served up to 10 schools spread out over an area the size of Ohio. Travel between schools was mostly with small single engine aircraft. I have a lot of "seat time" as a passenger supporting these 10 schools in a supervisory position. During this time, we have seen many small and large airline companies come and go. They seem to go for financial reasons. We support AAT for the following reasons:

Safety – We have flown with AAT many times since they started service in McGrath. They have a number of seasoned pilots that we trust.

They have a “base of operations” that works hand in hand with the pilots to assure that the best decisions are made in respect to weather and aircraft loading. We have seen this first hand at their terminal in Anchorage.

Alaska has its share of aircraft accidents. Most are pilot error. You may have read about two recent accidents where pilots took off or attempted landing downwind, one in which there was a fatality. These were common sense mistakes in larger aircraft. Other accidents resulted from “pushing” the weather. I have been on weather hold several times with AAT and they always made the right decisions and we have always felt safe flying with them.

The aircraft they are planning to use has an excellent safety record. I understand that they have an additional aircraft ordered which would make three Pilatus's.

Viability- McGrath has a steady population of 300 people.... With more in the summer as we have a fire fighting base here. We all know that competition is good for business and for the customers. In this case, we do not have the population to support two carriers in McGrath. This has been tried and has failed. AAT has promised to provide more than adequate service and they have ALWAYS made

good on their promises. The air fares, baggage allowances, hand carries, and etc. are fair and reasonable.

In closing, for several years AAT offered service to McGrath in competition with Ravn Air Service. Ravn was able to offer service at a much reduced cost with their essential service contract. AAT continued service and I observed that there were a lot of empty seats on their flights but they hung in there, hoping for better times. They also have strong ties in Nikolai and Takotna, our neighboring villages. It makes sense to give them the boost they deserve and help keep them viable so that we don't have to go through this again..... i.e. Ravn Air Service.

McGrath is extremely remote in location and we have parvo hitting us now. AAT has, on their own, twice purchased and flown in the medication which we so desperately need. No other company would be this caring. We matter to them beyond simply being customers.

Thank you for accepting this letter of support.

Respectfully,

David and Linda Shelborne

[dshelborne@gmail.com](mailto:dshelborne@gmail.com) [linda.shelborne@gmail.com](mailto:linda.shelborne@gmail.com)

enclosures: Additional Talking Points

Pilatus Equipment Specs

Fact Sheet on Misleading Information