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May 6, 2020

Docket DOT-OST-2020-0037

The Honorable David E. Short
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Deputy Assistant Secretary Short:

Attached is a support letter from Congresswoman Doris Matsui, the congressional representative of the district where Sacramento International Airport (SMF) is located.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert C. Land". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert C. Land
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs
and Associate General Counsel

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Docket DOT-OST-2020-0037

Dear Secretary Chao:

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented and dire impact on air travel, both within the U.S. and internationally. Airlines around the world have dramatically reduced their schedules and the flights that are operating have load factors in the single digits. While travel between states in this country has not been limited by government restrictions as have flights between the United States and many other countries, public health guidelines and statewide shelter-in-place orders have led to a similar result: a plunge in demand for air travel with many domestic flights carrying as few as five or six passengers.

It is clear that demand for air travel – particularly leisure travel – is not likely to significantly increase in the next few months. For that reason, I support JetBlue’s request to temporarily suspend or limit operations in Sacramento through the end of June. By granting JetBlue an exemption and permitting temporary suspension at Sacramento International Airport (SMF), the Department will enable JetBlue to preserve its liquidity rather than operating long haul flights with just a handful of customers. The temporary suspension and preservation of funds will enable JetBlue to emerge from this pandemic with more financial capacity to prioritize its workers, maintain employment, and provide service in the future when it is both needed and desired. Moreover, reducing these nearly empty flights will avoid thousands of pounds of carbon emissions, improving air quality and public health outcomes for Americans.

The CARES Act requires that airlines maintain a level of air service to communities, but provides the Department the ability to grant exemptions where reasonable and practicable. A temporary suspension of service at SMF clearly meets that definition, and I ask urge you to grant the exemption to JetBlue so that smaller airline carriers can emerge from this crisis in a better position to maintain its workforce and provide safe and reliable service to the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doris Matsui". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing was served by electronic mail this 6th day of May, 2020 on the following:

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