





previous Service Obligation, JetBlue announced that it would temporarily suspend BTV service due to the ongoing pandemic and associated reduced travel demand.<sup>2</sup> Sales were stopped and the service change was immediately loaded in OAG schedules with the last flight planned for February 7, 2021 (Service is planned to resume April 1, 2021). JetBlue BTV service, from February 8, 2021 through March 31, 2021, was not listed in the January 9, 2021, OAG Schedule that Order 2021-1-2 states is the basis for Appendix A. Therefore, JetBlue requests that DOT remove BTV from Appendix A as a JetBlue service obligation. Because numerous other carriers are continuing to serve BTV this winter, removing JetBlue's BTV service obligation will have no impact on the community's national connectivity.

Second, DOT also noted that "JetBlue remains obligated to provide Essential Air Service (EAS) at Mercedita International Airport (PSE) in Ponce, Puerto Rico, notwithstanding the exemption provided in the Notice of Action Taken on April 16, 2020."<sup>3</sup> In that notice, DOT, *sua sponte*, granted JetBlue relief from serving PSE through September 30, 2020, even though JetBlue had not requested such extended relief. JetBlue relied on that exemption and has not operated at PSE since Spring 2020. The airport is not currently open for non-stop service to the mainland United States and its physical status has changed on several occasions during the last year. Currently, an FAA NOTAM prevents all service at PSE that is not pre-screened at San Juan so JetBlue's pre-COVID PSE routes, to New York and Orlando, are not physically able to operate at PSE at this time.

JetBlue started service at Ponce on June 17, 2005, and is proud of its 15-year track record of serving the community on an unsubsidized basis. JetBlue has been in regular communication

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<sup>2</sup> JetBlue's expected BTV February load factor (pre-February 8, 2021), as of today, is 10%.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

with the Puerto Rico Ports Authority (PRPA) and is currently planning to resume PSE service on March 28, 2021, in a little less than 10 weeks, hoping that the NOTAM has been lifted by then. JetBlue is currently selling tickets for such service and has every intention of resuming service.

Attached as an Appendix is a letter from PRPA Executive Director Joel A. Pizá-Batiz expressing the Authority's "strong support" for "JetBlue's request that it not be required to start service at PSE until the Government of Puerto Rico and local health authorities authorize PRPA to do so."<sup>4</sup> He also noted that the "matter of air service resumption has been an important local topic that is currently receiving due consideration."<sup>5</sup> In these circumstances, JetBlue has no objection to DOT maintaining PSE as a covered service point in Appendix A, so long as any Final Order in this docket relieves JetBlue of its requirement to serve PSE until March 28, 2021. Alternatively, JetBlue would have no objection to DOT instituting an EAS case to determine if any carrier is willing to serve PSE on a subsidized basis pending JetBlue's return on March 28, 2021, in less than two months.

In conclusion, JetBlue once again commends DOT for its ongoing support as the entire U.S. airline industry continues to face an unprecedented and existential crisis.

Respectfully submitted,



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

January 12, 2021

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<sup>4</sup> Letter from PRPA Executive Director Joel A. Pizá-Batiz to The Honorable Joel Szabat, attached as an Appendix.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*



# GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO

Ports Authority

January 13, 2021

The Honorable Joel Szabat  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

## **Docket DOT-OST-2020-0037**

Dear Deputy Assistant Secretary Szabat,

On behalf of the Puerto Rico Ports Authority (PRPA), I am writing to express my strong support for JetBlue's request that it not be required to prematurely resume service at Ponce's Mercedita International Airport (PSE). Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, the PRPA has worked closely with the Governor's office, as well as with all airlines, regarding air service at Ponce and other airports. PSE airport is currently subject to an FAA NOTAM that restricts service to the mainland United States.

JetBlue has been a great partner since launching service at Ponce in 2005, over 15 years ago. We understand that JetBlue has plans to resume service at Ponce as early as March 28, 2021, if the FAA NOTAM restricting service at PSE is lifted.

The matter of air service resumption has been an important local topic that is currently receiving due consideration. In these circumstances, the PRPA supports JetBlue's request that it not be required to start service at PSE until the Government of Puerto Rico and local health authorities authorize PRPA to do so.

Sincerely,

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Joel A. Píza-Batiz, Esq.  
Executive Director  
Puerto Rico Ports Authority



**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing was served by electronic mail this 12<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2021, on the following:

Alaska	<a href="mailto:dheffernan@cozen.com">dheffernan@cozen.com</a> <a href="mailto:rwelford@cozen.com">rwelford@cozen.com</a>
ALPA	<a href="mailto:sascha.vanderbellen@alpa.org">sascha.vanderbellen@alpa.org</a>
American	<a href="mailto:robert.wirick@aa.com">robert.wirick@aa.com</a> <a href="mailto:molly.wilkinson@aa.com">molly.wilkinson@aa.com</a>
Atlas Air	<a href="mailto:naveen.rao@atlasair.com">naveen.rao@atlasair.com</a>
Delta	<a href="mailto:alex.krulic@delta.com">alex.krulic@delta.com</a> <a href="mailto:chris.walker@delta.com">chris.walker@delta.com</a> <a href="mailto:steven.seiden@delta.com">steven.seiden@delta.com</a>
FedEx Express	<a href="mailto:anne.bechdolt@fedex.com">anne.bechdolt@fedex.com</a> <a href="mailto:sllunsford@fedex.com">sllunsford@fedex.com</a> <a href="mailto:brian.hedberg@fedex.com">brian.hedberg@fedex.com</a>
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United	<a href="mailto:dan.weiss@united.com">dan.weiss@united.com</a> <a href="mailto:steve.morrissey@united.com">steve.morrissey@united.com</a> <a href="mailto:amna.arshad@freshfields.com">amna.arshad@freshfields.com</a>
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