

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 16, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On March 10, 2022, SkyWest Airlines announced they would discontinue air service to four cities within Kansas: Dodge City, Hays, Liberal, and Salina.

Since its inception in 1978, the Essential Air Service (EAS) program has been a critical resource for the nation in linking rural communities with major markets and economic opportunities. Additionally, it provides residents of our rural areas with transportation options on which families rely. These airports are imperative to rural communities, where public transportation options are limited compared to their urban counterparts.

Salina Airport is representative of the growth of the aviation market across the state, where the number of passengers increased 17 percent in 2021 compared to 2019, despite the ongoing complications of passenger travel due to COVID-19. As work and leisure travel further recovers in 2022, we can expect demand for air service to continue.

SkyWest's announcement unilaterally ends their contracts to our communities up to two years early, essentially cutting off our communities from larger airport hubs with no immediate substitute. They have a duty to our constituents to ensure continuity of service with a new carrier before leaving the respective markets early.

Thus, given the urgency of this situation, we request continued communication with our regional airport authorities on the ongoing efforts to find a new carrier to replace SkyWest Airlines. Additionally, we support the Department of Transportation's requirement that SkyWest retain their contracted level of service until the conclusion of the EAS selection case, and we urge continued commitment to the Hold-In Order until a new carrier is found.

We look forward to working with you to address this critical issue. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our staff.

Sincerely,



Jerry Moran
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



Tracey Mann
United States Representative