

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

19 June 2017

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

Thank you for your recent testimony before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation regarding the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration. We were pleased that you acknowledged the importance of the Essential Air Service (EAS) program in rural communities and stated that you are “working with the Administration to address” our concerns.

As you know, EAS provides critical support for rural communities across America, keeping our communities connected to friends, family, and the regional and global marketplace. Without this support, many rural areas may no longer have access to air services.

The Administration proposed in its fiscal year 2018 budget request to eliminate the congressional appropriations for EAS, leaving only the mandatory funding from overflight fees. This would significantly reduce support for rural communities in our states. A reduction in support could lead to a reduction in services and ultimately in jobs for rural America. As we move forward with the budget and FAA Reauthorization, we ask that you work with us on issues and challenges pertinent to rural aviation, and keep us informed relative to any changes regarding the EAS program.

Thank you for your continued attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to ensure rural Americans have access to air services.

Sincerely,



Deb Fischer  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senator



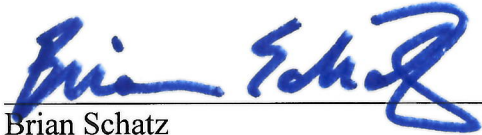
Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator




Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator