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April 30, 2004

The Honorable Norman Y. Mineta
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Fy04 Small Community Air Service Development Grant

Dear Secretary Mineta,

It is a pleasure for me to endorse the efforts of the Abilene Air Service Task Force in their quest to improve air service to this area of Texas. Certainly great strides have been made toward providing affordable alternatives to allow the citizens of West Texas to fly to multiple destinations. The positive impact this will have on the economic development and stability of this part of rural Texas is enormous.

The Task Force results are very tangible. With revenues from the 2002 program, the Abilene Regional Airport has completed a survey to determine the market demand for air service, secured a second carrier to Houston Intercontinental Airport, and has encouraged the airlines to make low promotional fares. The success of these efforts is demonstrated by a 46% increase in passengers in the first 6 months of 2 carrier service. This Public/Private Partnership is an excellent example of how West Texas pulls together to make things happen.

Please assist these efforts with a positive and enthusiastic endorsement in order for these efforts to better serve the citizens of the 32 county region and to improve the quality of life in the Abilene area. It would be so unfortunate to see these efforts thwarted by lack of funding. In the coming year they will continue to increase outreach to the rural areas, meet needs of the citizens, expand promotional fares, and continued upgrading and expansion of available air services. I can assure you that the Abilene Air Service Task Force will provide an excellent return on the investment from the Small Community Air Service Development Program.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Dixie B. Bassett

Dixie B. Bassett
President/CEO