



**U.S. Department of  
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation

Assistant Secretary

400 Seventh St. S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

**April 26, 2004**

The Honorable James L. Seward  
New York State Senate  
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Mr. Seward:

Thank you for your letter of April 15, addressed to Secretary Mineta, supporting an application of the Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport for a grant under the Small Community Air Service Development Program (Small Community Program). The Secretary has asked that I respond to your letter directly.

On March 15, the Department of Transportation issued an order inviting proposals from communities interested in applying for a grant under the Small Community Program this fiscal year. This program provides an excellent opportunity for small communities to improve their air service and to address problems with their airfares. Unique to this program is the flexibility that it provides communities in developing solutions to achieve these goals. Under this program, the Department can make a maximum of 40 grant awards each year, although no more than four awards may be to any one state. The program has been very popular. During each of the two years that it has been funded, the Department received well over 160 applications, many more than could be granted under the statute. The Department expects a similar response this year.

The deadline for filing proposals is May 14. Although an application from Ithaca has not yet been filed, I assure you that the Department will give full consideration to the proposal should it be submitted by the filing deadline.

In addition, as you may know, Ithaca filed an application in fiscal year 2003 under this program. Under the statute, the funds appropriated in each fiscal year remain available until expended. Consequently, the community's fiscal year 2003 application remains eligible for an award should grant funds awarded last year not be used.

For your convenience, I am enclosing a copy of the Department's fiscal year 2004 request for proposals.

As is our normal practice, I am placing a copy of your letter and this response in Docket OST-2004-17343 as a contact outside the record of this matter.

I appreciate your interest in this program. If I can provide further information or assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karan Bhatia". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and a long, sweeping tail.

Karan K. Bhatia  
Assistant Secretary  
for Aviation and International Affairs

Enclosure

**SECRETARY**  
MAJORITY CONFERENCE

**CHAIRMAN**  
INSURANCE COMMITTEE

**COMMITTEE MEMBER**

RULES

FINANCE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
& SMALL BUSINESS

EDUCATION

ENERGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

HIGHER EDUCATION

SOCIAL SERVICES

**THE SENATE**  
STATE OF NEW YORK



**JAMES L. SEWARD**  
SENATOR, 51ST DISTRICT

April 15, 2004

ROOM 917  
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247  
(518) 455-3131

41 S. MAIN STREET  
ONEONTA, NEW YORK 13820  
(607) 432-5524

COHLESKILL (518) 234-8133  
CORTLAND (607) 758-9005  
HERKIMER (315) 866-1632  
TOMPKINS (607) 272-4806  
CHEMANGO (607) 336-7309

WWW.SENATORJIMSEWARD.COM  
SEWARD@SENATE.STATE.NY.US

The Hon. Norman Y. Mineta  
Secretary of Transportation  
U. S. Department of Transportation  
400 7th Street, S. W. Room 10200  
Washington, D. C. 20590

Re: **ITHACA TOMPKINS REGIONAL AIRPORT**  
Ithaca, New York - Appln. for Small Community  
Air Service Development Grant

Dear Secretary Mineta:

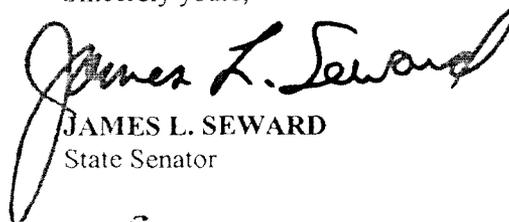
I am writing in support of the grant application from the Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport. As you may have read recently in *USA Today*, Ithaca has been named the "Number 1 Emerging City in the United States". It is well named. In addition to being in the heart of the beautiful Fingerlakes area of Central New York, it is home to Cornell University, Ithaca College, Tompkins Cortland Community College and to a large number of important businesses.

The air travel needs of this community are substantial but the erosion of air service has produced a lack of competition and very high airfares, forcing people to look to other airports for reasonably priced flights. Having all these people driving long distances for air travel is unproductive and costly for our schools and businesses as well as for the local economy.

A Small Community Air Service Development grant would assist Ithaca with its goal of attracting another air carrier to compete with its sole existing carrier, US Airways Express. A second airline would bring a greater choice and lower airfares that would be a tremendous help for our very mobile community.

As the "Number 1 Emerging City in the United States", Ithaca may well be the community of the future. Since it is isolated from rail and the interstate road system, it is vital that air service be improved over what is currently available. Your utmost consideration of Ithaca's application would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

  
JAMES L. SEWARD  
State Senator

JLS:lmb