

280618
 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 DIVISION OF AERONAUTICS – M.S.#40
 1120 N STREET
 P. O. BOX 942873
 SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001
 PHONE (916) 654-4959
 FAX (916) 653-9531
 TTY (916) 651-6827



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OST-04-17343-H6

May 4, 2004

Ms. Terri Bingham, Associate Director
 Office of Aviation Analysis
 Dockets and Media Management
 Docket 2004-17343, M-30, Room PL-401
 U.S. Department of Transportation
 400 7th Street, South West
 Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Ms Bingham:

The Coalition of California Airports for Improved Air Service (CCA), a consortium of seven airports located throughout California, is seeking assistance for a grant under the Small Community Air Service Development Program. The California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics, believes that such a grant of assistance is essential to improve air service for millions of Californians who currently have few choices available to them for commercial air service. On behalf of seven California communities, I am pleased to offer my support for this proposal.

In California, small communities face a range of fundamental economic challenges in both obtaining and retaining the commercial air service they need. In the past, these communities have tried individually to attract air service to their respective airports. This year, CCA is trying an innovative and cost-conscious approach by combining its resources to enable one airline to offer consistent, reliable and reasonably priced intrastate air service to its member airports.

Aviation generates \$14.5 billion in tourism within the state of California annually. When considering the impact of all aviation-related business upon our state, that figure swells to \$110.7 billion dollars each year. By assisting our smaller airports to attract new commercial air service, we will allow many California communities a greater opportunity to share in our state's vital tourism industry and participate in the larger economy by creating better access for their local businesses. In turn, with increased operating revenue, these small local airports will have the resources needed to make capital improvements on their own, with less reliance on grants or other government subsidies.

A grant from the Department of Transportation to the Coalition of California Airports will help many small communities from Northern to Southern California solve their air service deficiencies and produce a badly needed economic boost for many rural and suburban cities throughout the state. We hope that you will look favorably upon the application of CCA and provide grant assistance to this vital endeavor.

Sincerely,


 R. AUSTIN WISWELL, Chief
 Division of Aeronautics