DEB FISCHER
NEBRASKA

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 28, 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 be discontinuing air service at three Nebraska communities including Kearney, North Platte, and Scottsbluff.

Essential Air Service (EAS) is a crucial resource for Nebraska's rural communities, helping to diminish the rural and urban divide while generating economic development in the surrounding community. Nebraska's rural residents depend on this air service to connect with major markets as they are often hundreds of miles away from major airport hubs.

Nebraska's airports are great examples of the success of EAS. Kearney, North Platte, and Scottsbluff have all demonstrated year over year increases in passenger travel, returning to, and in some cases exceeding pre-pandemic enplanement numbers. As our nation continues to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic, passenger demand will continue to increase in 2022 as people look to visit family and travel leisurely.

SkyWest's decision to pull service before the end of their contracts with these airports endangers their ability to provide reliable service to larger airport hubs for their communities. It is important that each of these airports is able to maintain the level of service as guaranteed in their contracts with SkyWest.

Furthermore, it is imperative that Nebraska's airport authorities receive consistent and reliable communication during ongoing efforts to find a replacement service for SkyWest. Additionally, it is important that the Department of Transportation continues to issue Hold-In Orders to maintain service at the contracted level until a new carrier is found that will provide the same level of service and passenger capacity as the current contracts with SkyWest.

I look forward to working with you and your office to address the critical needs of these airports. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact my staff.

Sincerely,

Deb Fischer

Deb Fischer
United States Senator

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