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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

March 10, 2025

THE HONORABLE SEAN DUFFY  
*U.S. Secretary of Transportation*  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I write to request your consideration of modifications to Essential Air Service (EAS) contracts in Hawai'i. Specifically, I ask that the U.S. Department of Transportation shorten the duration of existing and upcoming EAS contracts in Hawai'i to one calendar year to ensure consistency and reliability of service.

As you are aware, Southern Airways Express (Southern), the air carrier providing service to all four EAS communities in Hawai'i, abruptly suspended its service in August 2024 and again in January 2025, due to maintenance concerns and out of an abundance of caution. While I appreciate the precautions taken by Southern to ensure passengers' safety, the disruption in air service caused significant distress to residents in EAS communities who depend on EAS routes to stay connected to essential health care and government services, often located on other islands.

Reliable EAS routes are paramount for residents in remote communities in Hawai'i, yet the current contract period for EAS services limits opportunities for the Department to assess the ability of air carriers to fulfill the requirements of their EAS contracts. Shortening the duration of these current and future contracts to periods of one year would create more opportunities for additional carriers to be considered for EAS contracts and increase competition for EAS subsidies. This change would serve to improve the consistency and flexibility of the EAS program to meet the needs of Hawai'i residents who rely on dependable air service.

Thank you for considering this request, and I look forward to working with you and the Department to improve access to safe and reliable air transportation for eligible EAS communities in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,



JILL N. TOKUDA  
*Member of Congress*