

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1304

May 14, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I was disappointed to learn of Cape Air Airline's recent filing notifying the Department of Transportation (DOT) that it intends to terminate passenger air service to Quincy, Illinois, through DOT's Essential Air Service (EAS) program. Quincy Regional Airport offers critical connections for residents and businesses in Quincy, and any interruption in air service will have a significant impact on the community and its economy. I urge DOT to issue an order prohibiting Cape Air from terminating service to Quincy until DOT is able to provide comparable passenger air service through a new or revised EAS contract that has the full support of the community.

Quincy Airport plays a vital role in connecting Western Illinois to the rest of the nation through daily flights to both Chicago O'Hare International Airport and St. Louis Lambert International Airport. And because Quincy is an eligible community under the EAS program, DOT has an obligation to ensure that this level of service is maintained. The decision to award an EAS contract to Cape Air for service to Quincy was supported by the community, and similar support will be essential for the success of the next EAS contract. I encourage DOT to continue its consultations with Quincy throughout the rebidding process.

Quincy joins Decatur, Illinois, and dozens of other small communities around the country whose EAS guaranteed passenger service is threatened by what regional airlines are calling a pilot shortage. As passenger air travel rebounds from the impacts of the pandemic, I urge DOT to engage with the airlines, labor, and EAS communities to address this issue and ensure EAS passenger service is protected in Illinois and around the country.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator