

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 27, 2012

The Honorable John Mica  
Chairman, Committee on  
Transportation and Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick Rahall  
Ranking Member, Committee on  
Transportation and Infrastructure  
2163 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller IV  
Chairman, Committee on  
Commerce, Science & Transportation  
254 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchinson  
Ranking Member, Committee on  
Commerce, Science & Transportation  
560 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Rahall, Chairman Rockefeller, and Ranking Member Hutchinson:

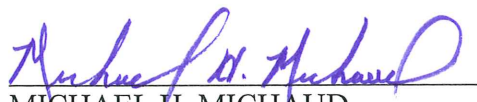
As you work to finalize the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), we write to reiterate our strong support for maintaining the Essential Air Service (EAS) program.

We cannot afford to eliminate a tool the economies of rural communities depend on, particularly when these communities are still feeling the effects of the recession. Businesses need access to convenient and dependable air service. A company getting ready to expand its operations will not consider an inaccessible community. A business in rural America cannot compete effectively if a lack of air service prevents access to the rest of the country.

We do not oppose reforming the EAS program. As with any program, Congress should constantly work to ensure it is spending taxpayer dollars as effectively as possible. However, simply sun-setting the existing program instead of pursuing meaningful reforms would do considerable damage to communities throughout the country. We urge you to preserve the EAS program in the final Conference Report on the FAA Reauthorization.

We are confident you will work in a bipartisan manner to ensure businesses in small, rural communities can continue to rely on air service supported by the EAS program. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

  
MICHAEL H. MICHAUD  
Member of Congress

  
ADRIAN SMITH  
Member of Congress