

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

October 16, 2019

The Honorable Joel Szabat  
Assistant Secretary  
Acting Under Secretary for Transportation Policy  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Assistant Secretary Szabat:

We are disappointed that the Department of Transportation intends to follow through with a termination of Essential Air Service (EAS) at Hagerstown Regional Airport (Hagerstown) as indicated in your Order 2019-10-10 released on October 11, 2019. This decision appears to ignore the significant progress the airport has made in complying with the program's requirements and the apparent, growing demand for the service. We request, therefore, that you work with us and with the airport to continue the service and to limit the economic disruption.

As you know, the continued success of EAS operations at Hagerstown is critical for operations in several other states, making this decision an issue of national concern. Hagerstown's final data for Fiscal Year 2019 confirms that the airport is in full compliance with EAS requirements, including fulfilling the requirements enacted in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-254) for subsidy per passenger as well as the minimum ten-passenger per-day average requirement.

We understand that at the time some of us met with you in September, you had not yet settled on a number for passengers-per-day, since your vetting process was still ongoing. Order 2019-10-10 further questions the validity of the airport's data. We are disappointed that your review of Hagerstown's circumstances did not provide any opportunity to resolve any discrepancies between data the Department deems acceptable and the data the airport presented to us.

A decision to follow through with the termination of the service contradicts the established policies for EAS while also doing a disservice to the federal government's current \$5.7 million investment in the airport's terminal expansion to accommodate an increased number of passengers. Moreover, the termination will negatively impact services at other airports throughout the Mid-Atlantic, Gulf, and New England regions.

We request that you maintain EAS at the airport in recognition of its compliance for Fiscal Year 2019 or until any concerns with data are fully resolved.

Thank you again for considering our views on this issue, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



David Trone  
Member of Congress