

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1104

February 26, 2018

The Honorable Derek Kan
Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Under Secretary Kan:

Thank you for meeting with me on February 5, 2018 to discuss the importance of Essential Air Service (EAS) for Kalaupapa, Hawaii. The Kalaupapa community is unique and almost completely reliant on air transportation. The anxiety of the Kalaupapa community has been heightened as a result of the three proposals that were submitted in response to the November 2017 Order Requesting Proposals with particular concern over for the subsidy free proposal.

While the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) general counsel interprets 49 U.S.C. § 41733 so that an air carrier who can provide basic essential air service subsidy free shall be selected, the Kalaupapa community needs assurance from USDOT that the quality of the air service will be closely monitored when an Order is issued to a subsidy free carrier.

The Kalaupapa community has voiced its concerns regarding the uncertainty in the one page proposal submitted by the carrier who is offering to provide air service subsidy free. These concerns are outlined in the attached January 22, 2018 petition submitted to USDOT signed by 110 individuals including Kalaupapa patients, residents, Hawaii Department of Health and National Park Service workers, and other stakeholders that serve the community.

I appreciate your office's consideration in listening to the concerns raised by the Kalaupapa community. As part of this ongoing discussion, I am transmitting this letter to memorialize our conversation that includes the following:

- 1) USDOT will provide a direct line of communication for input from the Kalaupapa community on any material changes of service provided by the carrier selected in this Order, and
- 2) USDOT will closely monitor the quality of air service, in terms of meeting the special needs of the Kalaupapa community, provided by the subsidy free carrier and, if necessary, reopen the Order before the renewal time. While we did not discuss the term of the contract, I understand USDOT can issue a two-year contract rather than a four-year contract. I ask that a two-year contract be considered as it will give USDOT and the community an opportunity to address the quality of air service provided by the subsidy free carrier in a timely manner.

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The history and circumstances of Kalaupapa particularly with its patient population require a level of air service and customer care that meets of the needs of the patients, residents and the state and federal staff that serve them. It is my expectation that the concerns of the Kalaupapa community are respected and addressed in USDOT's forthcoming Order.

Sincerely,



MAZIE K. HIRONO

U.S. Senator