

United States Senate

January 16, 2015

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

I am writing in strong support of Hawaiian Airlines' application (DOT-OST-2010-0018) to provide daily, nonstop service between Tokyo International Airport (Haneda Airport) in Japan and Kona International Airport in Hawaii.

Hawaii is the strongest market for flights between the United States and Haneda. Approximately 3.7 million Japanese visitors traveled to the United States in 2013. According to the Hawaii Tourism Authority, more than 1.5 million visitors of Japanese visitors traveled to Hawaii that year, which accounts for nearly half of all Japanese visitors to this country. Furthermore, the Tokyo-Kona market is one of the largest U.S. destination markets without a non-stop service option. Of the four Haneda-U.S. routes awarded in 2010, the Tokyo-Honolulu route has been the most stable.

International non-stop service between Tokyo and Kona will be vital to Hawaii's economy and the thousands of families that depend on a strong and sustainable tourism industry. The Hawaii Tourism Authority estimates that daily service will bring nearly 92,000 visitors to Kona every year. Hawaiian Airlines estimates that 39,000 of those visitors will be additional visitors to the state, which will generate 1,151 new jobs, \$65 million in direct spending, and \$117 million in total new sales.

Offering international services between Haneda and Kona will also relieve the strain on Honolulu International Airport, which is the fourth busiest airport in the nation for overseas arrivals and the only airport in Hawaii that is able to receive international flights. Currently, commercial travelers are forced to fly first to Honolulu for entry processing before continuing on to Kona.

I recognize that the Federal Inspection Services facility remains an issue at Kona International Airport. However, until 2012, this airport was receiving direct flights from Japan and processing international travelers at the existing facility. The State of Hawaii and Hawaii County continue to take steps to reiterate their commitment to resuming international operations at Kona. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has stated that it will work closely with stakeholders. I remain committed to ensuring that CBP continues to engage with the State and Hawaii County.

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I wholeheartedly support this application, and look forward to witnessing the positive outcomes nonstop service between Tokyo and Kona brings. I encourage you to give Hawaiian Airlines' proposal the serious consideration that it deserves.

Regards,


BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator