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2ND DISTRICT, HAWAII

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January 12, 2015

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

RE: DOT-OST-2010-0018

Dear Secretary Foxx,

It has come to my attention that the Department of Transportation is reviewing its award of a slot pair at Haneda to Delta Airlines that is currently being used for a Seattle-Tokyo route. It's my understanding that this review has been undertaken because Delta downgraded its flight from daily to seasonal status. Hawaiian Airlines is seeking to have the slot pair reallocated so that Hawaiian may establish daily non-stop service between Haneda and the city of Kona in the State of Hawaii. Market data and the public interest overwhelmingly favor this reallocation and I write in strong support of Hawaiian Airlines' application.

There is great demand for a direct route between Japan and Kona. Kona is one of the biggest U.S. destination markets without nonstop service to Tokyo. Even without any nonstop service, Kona already has more point of sale Japan passengers than 13 existing U.S. markets with nonstop service from Tokyo. Japan is Hawaii's largest international tourism market and Hawaiian Airlines is a trusted service provider, known in Japan for unparalleled service and genuine Hawaiian hospitality. Illustrating the demand for this route, the Hawaii Tourism Authority estimates Hawaiian's proposed flight would bring in 92,000 visitors and generate \$117 million in new sales and \$65 million in new direct spending each year.

As you may be aware, there is currently no Customs and Border Protection (CBP) presence at Kona International Airport. However, CBP was located there just a few years ago and did clear international passengers in a Federal Inspection Service area, infrastructure that remains today. Hawaii's Congressional delegation has been aggressively working to re-establish this CBP presence and the major factor preventing serious engagement by CBP is the lack of international flights and demand for CBP presence at Kona International. Reallocating the slot pair to Hawaiian Airlines would resolve this stalemate. All interested stakeholders, from the State of Hawaii to the Kona community, are working toward and willing to contribute to re-establishing a CBP presence in Kona. I have no doubt that the reallocation of these slots to Hawaiian Airlines would precipitate a quick resolution to this issue.

Awarding these slots to Hawaiian Airlines would re-establish a major tourism route and fully utilize the potential of these slots to increase tourism and direct spending in the U.S. If I can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Wendy Clerinx, my Legislative Director, at (202) 226-1107. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



TULSI GABBARD  
Member of Congress