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April 1, 2002

EAS and Domestic Analysis Division, X-53
Office of Aviation Analysis
Room 6401
Department of Transportation
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20590
Attn: Mr. Dennis DeVany

**Proposal to Provide Essential Air Service at
Laurel/Hattiesburg, Mississippi, Docket OST-2001-10685**

Dear Mr. DeVany:

In its Order 2001-12-26, the Department prohibited Express Airlines I (Express I) from terminating service at Laurel/Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and ordered Express I to maintain service between Laurel/Hattiesburg and Memphis, Tennessee, at a level of at least three nonstop or one-stop round trip flights each weekday and each weekend, until a replacement carrier actually begins service. That interim "hold-in" service obligation is currently extended through April 3, 2002, by Order 2002-3-1.

On behalf of Express I, I ask the Department to amend its interim hold-in service obligation to conform to the level of essential air service established by the Department for Laurel/Hattiesburg. In Order 94-5-6, the Department determined that the essential air service level for Laurel/Hattiesburg is at least two weekday roundtrips and two round trips each weekend to Atlanta, Memphis or New Orleans, with at least 44 seats in each direction each weekday and each weekend. This service may be provided on a nonstop or a one-stop basis.

Express I operates 33-seat Saab 340 aircraft in the Laurel/Hattiesburg-Memphis market. Until recently, Express I served Laurel/Hattiesburg through a combination of nonstop and one-stop service. All of Express I's Laurel/Hattiesburg-Memphis flights are now operated on a nonstop basis. By operating two nonstop roundtrip flights each weekday and each weekend with Saab 340 aircraft, Express I will provide 66 seats in each direction each weekday and 66 seats in each direction each weekend. This level of service will more than satisfy the EAS requirement established by the Department for Laurel/Hattiesburg. Indeed, by operating two flights nonstop rather than a combination of nonstop and one-stop flights, Express I will provide Laurel/Hattiesburg with the same or more seats as the community has historically received.

Accordingly, Express I respectfully requests that the Department amend its interim hold-in service obligation for Laurel/Hattiesburg and require Express I to maintain at least two nonstop or one-stop roundtrips each weekday and each weekend between Laurel/Hattiesburg and Memphis using Saab 340 aircraft, until the Department completes its selection proceeding and determines the carrier and level of service it intends to subsidize for Laurel/Hattiesburg service.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Curtis E. Sawyer".

Curtis E. Sawyer
Vice President and CFO

cc: All parties on service list

Service List

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