

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 17, 2023

Assistant Secretary Carol Petsonk
Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs
Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590-9898

Dear Assistant Secretary Petsonk:

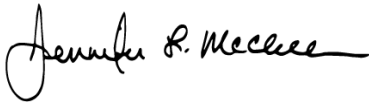
We write today to request full and fair consideration of the joint application by the Capital Region Airport Commission, ChamberRVA, the Greater Richmond Partnership, and Richmond Region Tourism for a grant under the Small Community Air Service Development Program under Docket DOT-OST-2023-0037. The goal of this grant is to provide the people of the Richmond Region with daily, nonstop service between Richmond International Airport (RIC) and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA).

Although Richmond has nonstop service to Los Angeles and San Francisco, it has no nonstop service to Seattle, which is the third largest hub airport on the West Coast and is almost 700 miles north of San Francisco. Nonstop service to this major hub will greatly assist travelers heading to the Pacific Northwest as well as those with final destinations in Western Canada, Alaska, and Asia. The substantial benefits include significantly reduced travel time, more competition, and hopefully, reduced air fares. The need for this important service for the Richmond region is evidenced by the strong support from ChamberRVA, the Greater Richmond Partnership, and Richmond Region Tourism, all of whom have joined the application with the Capital Region Airport Commission.

In considering RIC's current grant request, we urge the Department to take into account that RIC has been responsible and successful in using its prior SCASDP grants. In 2004, RIC received a SCASDP grant to assist it in bringing a low-fare carrier to the Airport. RIC was able to use the SCASDP funds to recruit two airlines, JetBlue and AirTran (now Southwest), to commence low-fare service in existing markets, with the result that fares to these cities dropped significantly. In 2013, the Department awarded RIC a second SCASDP grant and RIC put this grant to good use in establishing nonstop service to Denver, which continues to be a vital air service route to the Rocky Mountain Region. In summary, RIC's successful use of its grants are excellent examples of the effectiveness of the Small Community Air Service Development Program and demonstrate that RIC uses these valuable funds wisely.

For the aforementioned reasons, we request that the Department give full and fair consideration to the joint application by the Capital Region Airport Commission, Chamber RVA, the Greater Richmond Partnership and Richmond Region Tourism for a SCASDP grant to obtain nonstop service between Virginia's Capital Region and the Pacific Northwest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jennifer L. McClellan".

Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Robert J. Wittman".

Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Abigail Spanberger".

Abigail Spanberger
Member of Congress