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OST 2004-17343-928



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
DOCKET

2004 OCT 25 A 9:33

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1304

DICK:
~~Dear Senator Durbin.~~

Thank you for your letter of May 7 supporting the proposal of the Metropolitan Airport Authority in Moline, Illinois, which was filed as a part of nine-member consortium of Illinois airports, for a grant under the Small Community Air Service Development Program (Small Community Program).

The Small Community Program was established to help smaller communities address air service deficiencies, particularly issues related to high fares and insufficient service. Congress appropriated \$20 million for grant awards under this program in fiscal year 2004. Under the statute, the U.S. Department of Transportation may use the funds to make a maximum of 40 grant awards each year, although no more than four may be to the same State. In order to provide communities latitude in developing solutions to their air service problems, the statute provides significant flexibility in how the financial assistance may be used.

On March 15, the Department issued an order requesting that communities interested in receiving a grant this year file their applications by May 14. The Illinois consortium proposal is one of many submitted by the filing deadline. As these grant requests are pending before the Department, I am sure you understand that I cannot comment on the merits of any particular proposal. I assure you, however, that the Department will give full consideration to all proposals that have been filed.

As is our normal practice, I am placing a copy of your letter and this response in Docket OST-2004-17343 as a contact outside the record of this matter. I appreciate your interest in this program.

Sincerely yours,

Norman Y. Mineta

RICHARD J. DURBIN
ILLINOIS

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May 7, 2004

The Honorable Norman Y. Mineta
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Mineta:

I write today to express support for an application filed by the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign, Illinois) for a Small Community Air Service Development Grant. The University operates Willard Airport, which serves the citizens of Central Illinois.

These funds are being requested to expand and enhance marketing and promotional efforts for Willard Airport, including the FlyCMI Airport Awareness Campaign. This grant, paired with financial and resource commitments from the University, the Champaign County Economic Development Corporation, and various media partners, would help promote Willard Airport and the benefits of flying from this facility.

As you may know, Champaign County, recognized as a center for computing and technology, is home to the University of Illinois and the National Center for Supercomputing Applications.

I hope you will give the University of Illinois' thoughtful application full and fair consideration. I thank you in advance for your assistance.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator