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CITY OF WARROAD

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OST-01-10642-9

October 9, 2001

Norman Mieta, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 7th St. SW
Washington DC 20590

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
BOOKETS
02 JAN 22 AM 11:15

RE: Support for Continued Commercial Air Service to Thief River Falls, Minnesota

Dear Secretary Mieta:

Northwest Minnesota includes a huge geographic area. The nearest available commercial airline service to Warroad is through Thief River Falls – only about ninety miles from Warroad. Other potential airport destinations are over two to two & half hours driving time one-way (i.e. including International Falls, MN., Bemidji, MN., Grand Forks, ND., and Winnipeg, Canada).

Messaba Airlines has proposed discontinuation of commercial air service to Thief River Falls. This proposed discontinuation will have a negative economic impact upon Northwestern Minnesota, including the Warroad area. The availability of commercial air service is an important service that businesses are looking for when locating their facilities. In addition, discontinuation will negatively impact upon our developing tourism industry.

Rather than the proposed decreasing commercial service, Messaba Airlines should be reviewing expanded service – including into the Warroad International Airport. The Corporate Headquarters and main manufacturing facility for Marvin Windows & Doors is located in Warroad. At this time, Marvin Windows flies thousands of individuals into Warroad annually on their fleet of private aircraft because no commercial air service is available.

Warroad is at the center of an expanding tourism area around the Lake of the Woods. This broader region includes the City of Baudette and Rainy River resorts to the east, Warroad area, Buffalo Point (i.e. Canadian First Nation's resort development), and the Northwest Angle. Expanded future commercial service is important given the significant distances that visitors must travel to reach Northwestern Minnesota.

The City of Warroad urges the U.S. Department of Transportation to require continuation of commercial air service to Thief River Falls.

Sincerely,

Mayor Bob Marvin