

5/12/2003 Moran Works for Improved Air Services

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Introduces Legislation to Expand and Improve Essential Air Service Program

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today announced that he has introduced legislation to expand services provided by the Essential Air Service (EAS) program. The EAS program works to preserve air service to and from smaller communities. Six Kansas airports are currently served by the EAS program - Dodge City, Garden City, Great Bend, Hays, Liberal and Salina.

"Not only does the EAS program ensure that business travelers and other passengers can fly directly into and out of our more rural areas, it also provides an important contribution to the local economy," Moran said. "Airports in rural communities across the country are feeling the burden of a slow economy. This additional assistance will help."

In addition to increasing the annual funding to the program, Moran's legislation would encourage improved EAS marketing to increase customer traffic, improve regional access to major and national carriers by encouraging joint fares, as well as allowing more local control over how a community can use EAS funding.

Established in 1978, the EAS program now serves over 120 communities across the U.S. However, due to the terrorist attacks of September 11th and the war in Iraq, the financial condition of airlines serving these communities has deteriorated. Last month, the aviation industry received \$2.9 billion in emergency assistance, but this did not include additional assistance for small communities.

Moran has also recently worked to increase funding for the current EAS program. The program has received the same amount of funding the past two fiscal years. Moran recently urged the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation for additional funding for the coming year.

"This bill would give small and rural communities a greater role in the EAS process," said Tim Rogers, A.A.E., Executive Director of the Salina Airport Authority. "When enacted, this legislation will dramatically improve small community air service."

Moran is a member of the U.S. House Transportation Subcommittee on Aviation.

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