

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2602

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January 25, 2012

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I write to support Butte Montana's Bert Mooney Airport for Essential Air Service. I understand you are presently considering applications to provide, and I both hope and trust that you will make an appropriately expeditious decision. You, personally, have been accommodating and helpful in the past when we met to discuss this issue, and I appreciate your interest.

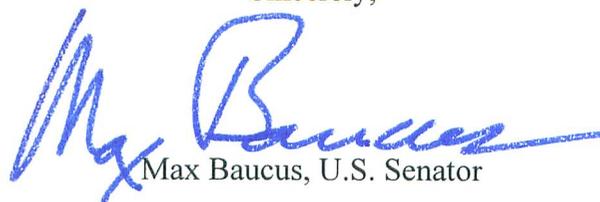
As you know, Delta announced plans on July 15, 2011 to end service to 24 airports including Butte's Bert Mooney Airport. It has been more than six months since they made the announcement. While I am thankful you answered our calls to prolong service to Butte, folks in the region are asking for answers regarding the future of air transportation to this important airport in the heart of Montana. Simply put, Mr. Secretary, we need certainty, so that Montanans know what they can rely upon.

Dependable air service is of paramount importance to my state. This undoubtedly is true for Butte, Montana's fifth largest city. Montana is a rural state, and the connectivity that airline service provides allows my constituents an indispensable link to our national economy.

The Butte-Silver Bow region relies on air service for the health, safety, and economic well-being of its citizens. I have heard from community leaders in Butte-Silver Bow expressing the view that dependable service for the region is a must.

It is my sincere hope that decisions regarding the Bert Mooney Airport will be made with Montana voices firmly in mind and expeditiously so that our small businesses and families will be able to plan ahead. As always, Mr. Secretary, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Max Baucus, U.S. Senator