

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 15, 2011

Mr. Richard Anderson  
President and CEO  
Delta Airlines  
1030 Delta Blvd.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30354-1989

Dear Mr. Anderson:

We understand that Delta Airlines seeks to terminate its current service at Bert Mooney Airport in Butte, Montana with the intention of applying for Essential Air Service (EAS) subsidization from the U.S. Department of Transportation. We urge you not to do so.

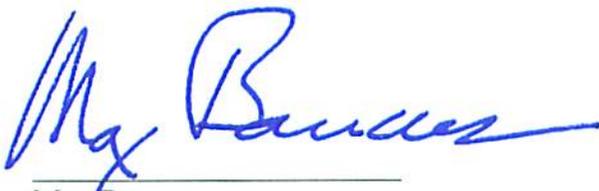
As you know, Delta and Northwest Airlines provided us with the attached letter in 2008 during the then-pending Delta-Northwest merger. In it you acknowledge the significance of the Delta and Northwest operations to Montana's economy, and you state that you would "continue to serve every city in Montana ... and maintain frequency and gauge levels."

In its FAA bill, the House of Representatives voted to eliminate the program entirely. Accordingly, the Senate-House FAA bill conference committee is currently considering the role of EAS and what kinds of communities should qualify for EAS funding. Among Montana's eight EAS communities, most of them have only several hundred enplanements annually. In contrast, Butte has approximately 26,000, the seventh-highest total in the entire state.

We understand the challenges facing Delta today. However, we would note that Bert Mooney Airport's revenue has increased by 9% and passenger count has improved by 7% since December, according to the Department of Transportation.

We stand ready to work with you to continue in your efforts to achieve success in Butte. We appreciate Delta's commitment to our state and the jobs that depend on Delta and its service. However, we believe that success can best be met by continuing to develop its relationship with its customers throughout southwestern Montana. We hope to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss this issue of critical importance to our state.

Sincerely,



Max Baucus  
U.S. Senator



Jon Tester  
U.S. Senator