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March 25, 2025
09:10 A.M.
State Capitol, Room 430

H.C.R. 131 & H.R. 127
URGING THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION AND STATE DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION TO ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE THE EXPANSION OF
ALTERNATIVE AIRLINE SERVICES THAT UTILIZE SHORT TAKEOFF AND
LANDING-CAPABLE AIRCRAFTS AND REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE
REFERENCE BUREAU TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE FEASIBILITY AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF A RURAL AIR SERVICE PROGRAM

House Committee on Transportation

The Department of Transportation (HDOT) provides **comments** on this measure.

HDOT is already working with potential new private air carriers that will add capacity to the commuter airlines flying in Hawaii. These private entities are currently applying for their federal certifications and approvals to operate in the State of Hawaii. These entities have also applied to become an essential air service provider for Molokai and Hana. Other rural airports are currently being serviced by a reliable air carrier. Other rural airports with less air transport demand may have to depend on air charter services. HDOT is actively working to accommodate additional commuter airline carriers at selected commercial airports which will include check-in counters, passenger hold areas and additional gates. sustainability and market demand.

As an airport operator receiving federal funding, HDOT is subject to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant assurances that prohibit the direct subsidization of air carriers. Establishing a state-funded subsidy program within HDOT would conflict with these federal requirements and could jeopardize HDOT's eligibility for federal funding.

Rather than providing direct subsidies, HDOT is actively working to procure an air charter service contract that will enable the State to support the transportation of high-priority travelers, including medical personnel, patients, and other essential service providers, to and from Molokai.

Further to address the immediate needs and concerns, HDOT is talking to other commuter airlines that have communicated their interest to enter the Hawaii market to offer another alternative for Molokai and Lanai residents as well as other rural airports throughout the State's airport system.

HDOT however does not support, based on previous research, the expansion of MKK runway because of the following.

- FAA Benefit-Cost Analysis would not justify the expansion of the runway at MKK.
- We could not get a commitment from a non-commuter airline to have scheduled service to Molokai.
- If we could get a non-commuter airline to fly to Molokai, we would need TSA at the airport, Will TSA be able to staff and provide equipment to the island again?
- In 2018, DOT signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Pulama Lana'i to extend the runway at Lana'i Airport by 500 feet. Pulama Lana'i through a letter dated May 31, 2024, informed DOT that the "estimated cost is too high for us to justify 500 feet of asphalt paving and related improvements. Consequently, we are writing to inform you that we would like to move forward with **terminating** the MOA".
- The improvements to MKK would include not only a 1,500 feet extension but, an additional 50 feet to the width of the runway

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HR-127

Submitted on: 3/21/2025 2:30:43 PM

Testimony for TRN on 3/25/2025 9:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank Schultz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this initiative.