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# HOUSE RESOLUTION

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 STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE FEASIBILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A RURAL AIR SERVICE PROGRAM.

1 WHEREAS, Hawai'i's rural communities, including those in  
2 Molokai, Lāna'i, and Hāna, rely heavily on air travel for  
3 essential services such as health care, education, and economic  
4 opportunities; and  
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6 WHEREAS, recent airline service reductions and increased  
7 ticket costs have severely impacted the accessibility and  
8 affordability of air transportation for residents in these  
9 areas; and  
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11 WHEREAS, many rural airports in Hawai'i have shorter  
12 runways, limiting the types of aircraft that can safely operate  
13 in these locations; and  
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15 WHEREAS, several aircraft models, including the De  
16 Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otter, Pilatus PC-12, Cessna 208  
17 Caravan, Dornier 228, and Let L-410 Turbolet, possess short  
18 takeoff and landing capabilities that make them suitable for  
19 operations on short and unpaved runways; and  
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21 WHEREAS, many countries and states have successfully  
22 implemented programs to support rural and remote communities  
23 with small airplane services, ensuring transportation access for  
24 medical, economic, and general connectivity purposes, such as  
25 the Essential Air Service in the United States, Norway's Public  
26 Service Obligation routes, and Australia's Royal Flying Doctor  
27 Service; and  
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1 WHEREAS, the United States Essential Air Service program  
2 provides federal subsidies to airlines operating in regions that  
3 would otherwise lack scheduled air transport, benefiting rural  
4 communities in multiple states including Alaska, Hawai'i, and  
5 Montana; and  
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7 WHEREAS, Norway's Public Service Obligation-supported air  
8 network ensures essential air connectivity for remote and rural  
9 areas, subsidizing routes that would not be commercially viable  
10 due to low passenger volumes and challenging geography; and  
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12 WHEREAS, Alaska's Rural Aviation System has developed a  
13 unique network of state-supported small air carriers that  
14 provide critical passenger and freight services to isolated  
15 communities, supported by state funding for rural airports and  
16 maintenance; and  
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18 WHEREAS, public-private partnerships with private operators  
19 such as Hawaii Life Flight and Guardian Flight currently provide  
20 emergency medical air transport to outer islands; and  
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22 WHEREAS, alternative airline service providers utilizing  
23 short takeoff and landing aircrafts can improve air connectivity  
24 by offering more frequent and reliable routes between rural  
25 airports and major transportation hubs, enhancing economic  
26 opportunities, medical access, and overall quality of life for  
27 residents; now, therefore,  
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29 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
30 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
31 of 2025, that the Federal Aviation Administration and State  
32 Department of Transportation are urged to encourage and  
33 facilitate the expansion of alternative airline services that  
34 utilize short takeoff and landing-capable aircrafts to better  
35 serve rural and remote communities in the State; and  
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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Department of  
38 Transportation is urged to investigate potential incentives,  
39 partnerships, and regulatory changes to encourage and facilitate  
40 the operation of short takeoff and landing aircrafts to serve  
41 rural communities; and  
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Department of  
2 Transportation is requested to conduct a study on the  
3 feasibility and implementation of a rural air service program in  
4 the State, identifying the best options for such programs,  
5 including funding mechanisms, regulatory considerations, and  
6 potential airline partnerships, including public-private  
7 partnerships; and

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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Department of  
10 Transportation is requested to submit a report of its finding  
11 and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the  
12 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
13 the Regular Session of 2026; and

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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
16 Resolution be transmitted to the Administrator of the Federal  
17 Aviation Administration, Governor, Director of Transportation,  
18 and mayors of each county.

