
HOUSE CONCURRENT 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 LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU 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



1 Service Obligation routes, and Australia's Royal Flying Doctor
2 Service; and
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4 WHEREAS, the United States Essential Air Service program
5 provides federal subsidies to airlines operating in regions that
6 would otherwise lack scheduled air transport, benefiting rural
7 communities in multiple states including Hawai'i, Montana, and
8 Alaska; and
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10 WHEREAS, Norway's Public Service Obligation-supported air
11 network ensures essential air connectivity for remote and rural
12 areas, subsidizing routes that would not be commercially viable
13 due to low passenger volumes and challenging geography; and
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15 WHEREAS, Alaska's Rural Aviation System has developed a
16 unique network of state-supported small air carriers that
17 provide critical passenger and freight services to isolated
18 communities, supported by state funding for rural airports and
19 maintenance; and
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21 WHEREAS, public-private partnerships with private operators
22 such as Hawaii Life Flight and Guardian Flight currently provide
23 emergency medical air transport to outer islands; and
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25 WHEREAS, alternative airline service providers utilizing
26 short takeoff and landing aircrafts can improve air connectivity
27 by offering more frequent and reliable routes between rural
28 airports and major transportation hubs, enhancing economic
29 opportunities, medical access, and overall quality of life for
30 residents; now, therefore,
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32 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
33 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
34 of 2025, the Senate concurring, that the Federal Aviation
35 Administration and State Department of Transportation are urged
36 to encourage and facilitate the expansion of alternative airline
37 services that utilize short takeoff and landing-capable
38 aircrafts to better serve rural and remote communities in the
39 State; and
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41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Department of
42 Transportation is urged to investigate potential incentives,



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1 partnerships, and regulatory changes to encourage and facilitate
2 the operation of short takeoff and landing aircrafts to serve
3 rural communities; and
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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
6 Bureau is requested to conduct a study on the feasibility and
7 implementation of a rural air service program in the State,
8 identifying the best options for such programs, including
9 funding mechanisms, regulatory considerations, and potential
10 airline partnerships, including public-private partnerships; and
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
13 Bureau is requested to submit a report of its finding and
14 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
15 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
16 the Regular Session of 2026; and
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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
19 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Administrator of the
20 Federal Aviation Administration, Governor, Director of
21 Transportation, Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau,
22 and mayors of each county.
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OFFERED BY: 

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