
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 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
26 Service Obligation routes, and Australia's Royal Flying Doctor
27 Service; and



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 Hawai'i, Montana, and
5 Alaska; 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 Legislative Reference
2 Bureau is requested to conduct a study on the feasibility and
3 implementation of a rural air service program in the State,
4 identifying the best options for such programs, including
5 funding mechanisms, regulatory considerations, and potential
6 airline partnerships, including public-private partnerships; and
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8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
9 Bureau is requested to submit a report of its finding and
10 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
11 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
12 the Regular Session of 2026; and
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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
15 Resolution be transmitted to the Administrator of the Federal
16 Aviation Administration, Governor, Director of Transportation,
17 Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau, and mayors of each
18 county.
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OFFERED BY:


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