

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To extend the authorization of appropriations for additional funds for the
essential air service program.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. SCHATZ, and Ms. MURKOWSKI)
introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the
Committee on _____

A BILL

To extend the authorization of appropriations for additional
funds for the essential air service program.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Keeping Our Commit-
5 ment to Essential Air Service Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) The intent of the Airline Deregulation Act
9 of 1978 (Public Law 95–504; 92 Stat. 1705) was to
10 benefit consumers by expanding competition and al-

1 lowing United States air carriers greater ability to
2 decide which destinations to serve and set pricing on
3 airfares.

4 (2) Congress recognized that the intended bene-
5 fits of deregulation may not reach all small commu-
6 nities, so the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978 also
7 authorized the essential air service program so that
8 small communities would not lose air service or con-
9 sumer choice if air carriers chose to serve the larger
10 and more profitable markets.

11 (3) According to the Department of Transpor-
12 tation, more than 170 communities in 35 States
13 were served by the essential air service program in
14 fiscal year 2016.

15 (4) Without the essential air service program,
16 air service would be cost prohibitive in many smaller
17 communities, especially in Alaska and Hawaii where
18 air travel is often the only mode of transportation.

19 (5) The essential air service program provides
20 small communities greater consumer choice and a
21 lifeline to essential goods and services such as med-
22 ical care, increases economic opportunity, and at-
23 tracts visitors and new businesses.

1 **SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIA-**
2 **TIONS FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR ESSEN-**
3 **TIAL AIR SERVICE PROGRAM.**

4 Section 41742(a)(2) of title 49, United States Code,
5 is amended by striking “and 2017” and inserting
6 “through 2022”.