



Chippewa Valley
REGIONAL AIRPORT

July 8, 2024

Mr. Kevin Schlemmer
U.S. Department of Transportation
EAS & Domestic Analysis Division
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590
202-366-3176

Reference: Eau Claire Essential Air Service DOT-OST-2009-0306 and Order 2024-5-19

Dear Mr. Schlemmer,

Background – This letter constitutes the official comments of Chippewa Valley Regional Airport Commission, which is the official governing body of the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport (EAU), on the matter of Essential Air Service (EAS) proposals received in response to the Department's May 16, 2024, request for Eau Claire service proposals.

In response to the June 18, 2024, RFP deadline, two carriers offered proposals to provide Eau Claire EAS; the incumbent Sun Country Airlines and SkyWest Airlines, who previously served the market from 2010-2022.

Summary of EAS Proposals:

Sun Country Airlines

Sun Country Airlines offered to provide service with a Boeing 737-800 (186 seats) with a total of 512 annual segments operated. On a year-round basis, three round trips would be offered per week to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) with an opportunity to connect to the Sun Country nationwide network.

In addition to this baseline service, Sun Country would offer a seasonally rotating second hub service of at least two round trips per week on each route: late November to April, service to Fort Myers, FL; May until late August, service to Orlando; late August to late November, service to Las Vegas.

In total, Sun Country would offer 512 annual segments, 95,232 annual seats and has forecast 50,027 annual passengers with a load factor of 53%.

SkyWest Airlines

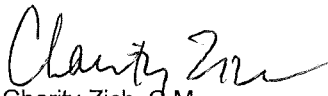
SkyWest Airlines proposes to provide 12 roundtrip flights per week to Chicago O'Hare International Airport flying a CRJ200 (50 seats). The carrier will codeshare with United Airlines, providing a fully integrated service model with one stop booking and customer service via United Airlines to hundreds of worldwide destinations.

We look forward to working with SkyWest Airlines to fulfill their commitment to provide reliable service with premium connectivity that allows our region access to the world and the rest of the world access to our community. We understand the challenges with promoting the return of this service and SkyWest Airlines has committed to assisting in promoting the service to help educate local travelers on the availability of the new service.

Please understand that despite their support for SkyWest's proposal, the Airport Commission shares our community's disappointment at losing the seasonal service opportunities Sun Country has provided over the last 18 months. We are committed to continuing the conversation with Sun Country to hopefully bring back nonstop seasonal service without subsidy. We hope our community continues to support the Sun Country service through the end of the current contract period to help us build confidence with Sun Country that we can support seasonal service without subsidy.

The Airport Commission would like to thank the US DOT for their ongoing efforts to support small community air service and for providing this opportunity to comment on proposals to provide airline service to the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charity Zich".

Charity Zich, C.M.
Airport Director