



July 19, 2023

Dear Members of the U.S. House of Representatives:

On behalf of national organizations representing state and local officials, we write in **opposition to amendment number 62** to H.R.3935, the Securing Growth and Robust Leadership in American Aviation Act, which would strike funding authorization for the Essential Air Service (EAS) program. **We urge you to oppose amendment number 62.**

Congress has wisely and regularly invested in EAS, recognizing that air service is one of the elemental ties that bind our vast nation together. The EAS program is a lifeline to many small and remote communities. The EAS program ensures that over 170 small and rural communities in 35 states and territories across the country have access to commercial air service. Commercial air service is an economic generator and job creator for these areas, as well as serves as a vital link to access critical medical services that might only be available in larger cities.

Without this program, the consequences would be severe for many EAS communities. Most air carriers would discontinue their services, which would make it difficult for these communities to attract and retain businesses that depend on commercial air service. Additionally, these communities would suffer job losses of individuals involved with airport operations and construction projects, cargo operations would cease to exist or move elsewhere, supporting businesses, such as restaurants, hotels, rental car companies, and local shops, would suffer without air travel visitors, and it would be difficult for communities to recruit and retain talent, including medical professionals at local hospitals.

To find a replacement air carrier without the EAS program is extremely difficult, as it takes many years to build passenger traffic for any new service, and most new commuter carriers do not have the resources and capital needed to cover losses in those initial years.

We recognize Congress faces funding constraints, but this amendment would have an immediate and devastating impact on these communities. **We urge you to oppose amendment number 62.** A vote against this amendment will ensure that small and rural communities across the nation will continue to have adequate access to the national air transportation system.

Sincerely,

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
National Association of Counties
National Association of State Aviation Officials
National Conference of State Legislatures
National League of Cities
The United States Conference of Mayors