

HAROLD ROGERS  
5TH DISTRICT, KENTUCKY

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
STATE AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS  
RANKING MEMBER  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-1705

April 14, 2021

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Chairman  
House Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
2164 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

As you begin work on surface transportation reauthorization legislation, as well as a potential broader infrastructure package, I would like to thank you for your work to ensure that all Americans can benefit from our nation's vast infrastructure—whether through building and improving roadways, bridges, tunnels, or other infrastructure projects. Previous surface transportation bills have done a great deal to help the people of my district in southern and eastern Kentucky, as improving our infrastructure is one of the most effective ways to promote economic growth and prosperity. As you begin the 2021 surface transportation reauthorization process and consider a broader infrastructure package, in addition to surface transportation priorities I will submit to the Committee later this month, I would like to raise a specific priority that will benefit those in my district in Kentucky—adding the Lake Cumberland Regional Airport (SME) to the Essential Air Service (EAS) program. Legislative language for this proposal is attached.

As you know well, the Essential Air Service (EAS) program was created as a result of the 1978 Airline Deregulation Act (ADA). Throughout its history, this program has provided necessary funding to ensure that our nation's small and rural communities continue to have access to our vital air transportation system. In my district, the London-Corbin Airport was designated as an EAS location and provided this vital service to the region until it stopped receiving EAS subsidies in 1985. Since then, as a result of the removal of this critical access point to the national transportation network, southern and eastern Kentucky has experienced direct economic challenges.

The Lake Cumberland Regional Airport (SME) in Somerset, Kentucky is well positioned within the region to provide this critical service to a community that greatly needs this increase in economic opportunity. Having passenger air service access to larger airport hubs from the region will allow for these distressed communities to increase investment, employment, and overall economic activity. In addition to this increase in mobility for residents in our region, it is important to note that Somerset has much to offer with its direct access to Lake Cumberland – a

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

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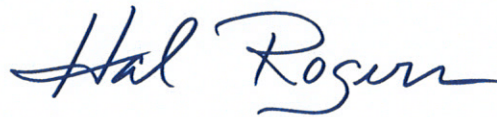
48 SOUTH KENTUCKY HIGHWAY 15  
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popular tourism destination attracting more than 4 million visitors each year. The communities are in full support of this initiative and the ingredients needed for the successful launch of passenger air service at SME are in place. Airport infrastructure including a passenger terminal, instrument landing system (ILS) approach, and 5,800-foot all-weather runway are in place. Further, airlines have expressed interest in providing this service to major connecting hubs if SME is added to the EAS program.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, as well as my other surface transportation requests, submitted on behalf of the people of the fifth district of Kentucky. I look forward to working with you and your staff on this legislation to ensure we continue to invest in our nation's critical infrastructure needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hal Rogers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

HAL ROGERS  
Member of Congress

**[DISCUSSION DRAFT]**

1 **SEC. \_\_\_\_ . EAS WAIVER.**

2       Notwithstanding any other provision of law and not  
3 later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act,  
4 the Secretary of Transportation shall provide a subsidy  
5 under the Essential Air Service program under chapter  
6 417 of subtitle VII of title 49, United States Code, for  
7 the Lake Cumberland Airport in Somerset, Kentucky.