



**Coalition
Of
New
England
Companies for
Trade**

May 24, 2017

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The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

**Re: Support for JetBlue's Application to Serve Boston-Havana
Docket DOT-OST-2016-0021**

Dear Secretary Chao:

The Coalition of New England Companies for Trade (CONNECT) is 1,200 member non-profit international trade association for companies involved in importing, exporting and transportation of people and goods around the globe. CONNECT is writing to you in strong support of JetBlue's application to serve Havana, Cuba (HAV) from Boston Logan International Airport (BOS). The departure of Spirit and Frontier from the United States-Havana market made available 21 weekly frequencies, and their exit represents a unique and important opportunity for the Department to promote service to Cuba from additional U.S. cities. JetBlue's service proposal, involving new, Saturday-only non-stop service between Boston and Havana will maximize public benefits and connect these important markets.

We believe there is strong demand for nonstop scheduled service between Boston and Havana, with positive benefits accruing to Massachusetts and the entire New England region, as Boston Logan is the sole airport of entry or departure within New England for flights to and from Cuba. An award to JetBlue of one frequency to offer Saturday-only non-stop service between Boston and Havana would provide better connections for the area's leading healthcare, biotechnology, financial, cultural and educational institutions to link those vital sectors with new opportunities in Cuba. All have significant connections to Cuba which will drive demand under the existing twelve categories of travel while tourism remains prohibited.

"Dedicated to promoting free and fair trade"

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Moreover, JetBlue is Boston's largest carrier, with nonstop service to 63 destinations. JetBlue's brand is well known throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, including in Cuba where JetBlue was the first U.S. carrier to launch passenger service and has shown its commitment to the market through consistent service and strategic investments (all at a time when competitors are exiting the market). Customers prefer traveling to the region on JetBlue because of JetBlue's award winning customer experience and the ease of traveling through Boston Logan International Airport.

We respectfully urge the Department to award one of the 21 available United States-Havana frequencies to JetBlue to fund its proposed Saturday-only service between Boston and Havana. Such a decision will be the highest and best use of this limited resource and will generate exciting new travel opportunities for the entire New England region. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors
Coalition of New England Companies for Trade (CONNECT)
508-481-0424