

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

April 28, 2011

Mr. Gary C. Kelly  
President and CEO  
Southwest Airlines  
Dallas, TX 75235

Dear Mr. Kelly:

Now that the U.S. Department of Justice has concluded its review of the Southwest-AirTran merger, we hope that you will strongly consider resuming service to the Burlington International Airport. Like many states, Vermont depends on affordable and accessible air travel to help drive its economy. Restoring the Burlington service once provided by AirTran will benefit both Vermonters and visitors to our state.

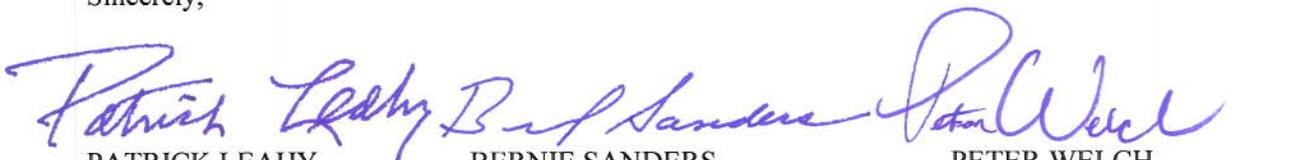
Burlington is a dynamic, economically thriving city, and its airport's service area includes over a million people in Vermont, New York, and Quebec. The demographic characteristics of the Burlington area should make it attractive to an air carrier like yours because of its growing population, high median income, vibrant business community, strong tourism base, and substantial traveler and college populations. Burlington also is widely known as one of the nation's "most-livable" cities, and the rich quality of life in Vermont attracts visitors, business people, and tourists alike.

As you evaluate the Burlington market, we would like to point out that the number of people using the airport is expected to climb as regional transportation corridors continue to improve. Canadians already make up an estimated 40 percent of travelers flying from Burlington today. The airport's access to the Canadian market will expand even further upon completion of Canadian Autoroute 35 to the U.S. border, which will reduce the drive time from Montreal to Burlington considerably. In addition, Greyhound bus service from Montreal has improved significantly with the opening of a new bus terminal at the Burlington airport. To address this growth potential, the airport recently completed a \$28 million terminal expansion project and \$15 million parking expansion that added 1400 new covered parking spaces.

AirTran's Burlington route was popular and economical. AirTran has maintained gate and desk space at Burlington as it anticipated a possible return to service this year. Since that decision now rests with Southwest, and in light of the opportunities outlined above, we hope you will restore air service to Burlington at the earliest possible opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any assistance during your review process. We look forward to working with you and others at Southwest in the future.

Sincerely,

  
PATRICK LEAHY      BERNIE SANDERS      PETER WELCH  
United States Senator      United States Senator      United States Representative