



September 15, 2023

Mayor Bruce Knell  
123 West 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Casper, WY 82601

Dear Mayor Knell,

We write to you today in response to your recent KGWYN – Wyoming News Now interview in which you called for the cessation of air service funding in Wyoming and for the closure of numerous airports across the state. Our Southwest Wyoming Regional Airport was one of the specific airports called out in your statement.

The Southwest Wyoming Regional Airport is a critical economic driver for Southwest Wyoming, supporting over \$36.9 million in annual economic activity including \$25.5 million in annual spending and 324 jobs resulting in \$11.4 million in annual payroll. Much like your local airport, our airport provides critical connectivity to the global economy for dozens of commercial and industrial employers in Southwest Wyoming while also providing residents connectivity to healthcare, friends, family and leisure destinations, improving the overall quality of life for our workforce.

In addition to this critical connectivity, our airport supports valuable services and industries including, but not limited to, emergency medical transport, aerial firefighting, rangeland management, aerial surveying, advanced mineral exploration, wildlife management, electrical generation/transmission patrols, and pipeline patrols. Overall, our combined investment in the Southwest Wyoming Regional Airport is far eclipsed by the economic value to our community.


Our airport is not alone in its economic value. Airports across Wyoming support robust economic activity in more than three dozen communities. Overall, Wyoming's airports support over \$2 billion in annual economic activity including in our key tourism, mineral extraction, agriculture, and advanced manufacturing industries.


In regard to your concerns regarding the state and local investment in commercial air service in the state, we can assure you the investment is well worth it. In fact, a recent statewide study found that the \$60.5 million invested in air service minimum revenue guarantees from 2004 to 2020 across the State produced a direct economic output of \$808 million for an average ROI of 12.36 for every dollar invested. That means that every dollar invested resulted in over \$13 of economic output. Furthermore, the investment supported over 9,500 jobs, produced 451,000 incremental visitors with a total spending of over \$583 million, and drove incremental state tax revenues of over \$55.8 million.


Due to the real economic challenges that air carriers face in providing service to rural communities like ours, commercial air service would be lost in our community without this investment. While you may be willing to risk your local economy's vitality, we are not. Our airport and its air service are foundationally critical assets to our community.


We hope that you will take the time to meet with your local airport leaders to gain a better understanding of the critical importance your airport plays to the City of Casper and Natrona County.

Sincerely,

  
Keaton West (Sep 15, 2023 18:25 MDT)  
Chairman Keaton D. West  
Sweetwater County Commission

  
Pete Rust (Sep 16, 2023 15:13 MDT)  
Mayor Pete Rust  
City of Green River

  
Max Mickelson (Sep 15, 2023 17:59 MDT)  
Mayor Gordon "Max" Mickelson  
City of Rock Springs

  
Jim Wamsley (Sep 15, 2023 20:48 MDT)  
Chairman Jim Wamsley  
Rock Springs-Sweetwater County Airport Board

  
Devon Brubaker, AAE, Airport Director  
Southwest Wyoming Regional Airport

CC: Governor Mark Gordon  
WYDOT Director Darin Westby  
WYDOT Aeronautics Administrator Brian Olsen












# Casper Mayor Joint Letter


Final Audit Report


2023-09-16


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