

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 30, 2023

Mr. Robin Hayes
Chief Executive Officer
JetBlue Airways Corp.
27-01 Queens Plaza, North
Long Island City, NY 11101

Dear Mr. Hayes,

We write to express our disappointment with JetBlue's recent decision to terminate service between Burlington, Vermont, at the Patrick Leahy Burlington International Airport (Leahy BTV) and New York City, New York, at the John Fitzgerald Kennedy International Airport (JFK) starting January 4, 2024, and to request additional information regarding the announcement. We strongly urge you to consider reinstating service between Burlington and JFK and, in the event you do not reinstate service, to compensate all passengers impacted by this service termination.

JetBlue has flown in and out of Burlington for more than two decades. On average, the Leahy BTV-JFK route accounts for 10% of all passengers flying into Burlington on a monthly basis. Your decision to abruptly terminate service at Leahy BTV has the potential to harm businesses in our state and make travel for constituents between Vermont and New York significantly more difficult. The news was particularly difficult to receive on the same day your corporation announced an expansion of your transatlantic service at JFK.¹

This decision surprised us and many in Vermont. With advance notice, our offices may have been able to work with you and federal authorities to help prevent the need for this decision. We strongly urge you to:

- **Reinstate Service to Leahy BTV from JFK.** JetBlue and Leahy BTV have had a successful business relationship that has spanned over two decades. We ask that you consider reinstating the route.
- **Immediately Reimburse All Impacted Passengers.** Many U.S. passengers buy their flights well in advance to ensure the cheapest prices possible. Any customer whose flight was impacted by this decision should be reimbursed immediately, assuming you do not reverse your decision to terminate service.

To provide further clarity, we ask for a staff briefing no later than November 6, 2023, and provide written answers to the following questions ahead of time:

¹ JetBlue Airways Corp. *A Celtic Combo: JetBlue Announces Seasonal Flights to Dublin and Edinburgh on Sale Today* (online at <https://news.jetblue.com/latest-news/press-release-details/2023/A-Celtic-Combo-JetBlue-Announces-Seasonal-Flights-to-Dublin-and-Edinburgh-on-Sale-Today/default.aspx>).

1. Why did JetBlue decide to terminate service between Leahy BTV and JFK? What alternatives, if any, did JetBlue consider before making its decision, and why were those alternatives not pursued as an interim step?
2. Should JetBlue decide to reinstate service to Leahy BTV, what steps would the airline need to take and how long would the reinstatement process take?
3. What steps has JetBlue taken to date to compensate and otherwise support impacted passengers? How many passengers have had or will have flights canceled as a result of this decision?
4. What additional steps does JetBlue plan to take to ensure passengers are made whole, and what is the timeline for those actions?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, JetBlue received nearly \$1 billion in emergency support in CARES Act funding.² Vermonters and U.S. taxpayers stepped up to support the airline industry because we understand it is essential to connecting the world in our modern economy.

We urge you not to leave rural America behind by abandoning this essential service in places like Patrick Leahy Burlington International Airport and remain willing to work with you to help address some of the circumstances that led to your decision.

Sincerely,



BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator



PETER WELCH
United States Senator



BECCA BALINT
Member of Congress

² New York Times. *Crippled Airline Industry to Get \$25 Billion Bailout, Part of It as Loans* (online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/14/business/coronavirus-airlines-bailout-treasury-department.html>).