



**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Issued by the Department of Transportation
on the 12th day of October, 1999

Ninety-day notice of intent of

MESA AIR GROUP, INC.

to terminate service at Bridgeport, Connecticut,
under 49 U.S.C. 41731 *et seq.* and 14 CFR Part
323

Served: October 15, 1999

Docket OST-99-6186

**ORDER ALLOWING TERMINATION OF SERVICE
BUT DENYING REQUEST TO TERMINATE
ON LESS THAN 90-DAYS NOTICE**

Summary

By this order the Department is allowing Mesa Air Group, Inc., to terminate all scheduled air service at Bridgeport, Connecticut, and denying the carrier's request to terminate its service on less than 90-days notice.

Background

On August 27, 1999, Mesa Air Group, Inc. (Mesa) filed a 90-day notice of its intent to terminate all scheduled air service at Bridgeport, Connecticut, effective October 1, 1999. The carrier requested an exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 41734 and a waiver of 14 CFR 323.3 (a)(1) to permit it to terminate its service on less than 90-days notice.

Mesa, operating as a USAirways Express carrier, is the only carrier providing scheduled air passenger service at Bridgeport and currently operates four nonstop round trips each weekday and six nonstop round trips each weekend period between Bridgeport and Baltimore, with 19-seat Beech 1900 aircraft.

Essential Air Service for Bridgeport was established by Civil Aeronautics Board Order 83-7-20, issued July 7, 1983, and requires at least two nonstop or one-stop round trips

to Boston each weekday and over each weekend period, with sufficient capacity to accommodate 35 passengers each service day.

Community Comments

On September 10, 1999, the Airport Manager of Sikorsky Memorial Airport, on behalf of the City of Bridgeport, filed a letter stating that the Airport Commission had voted to deny Mesa's request for an exemption from the 90-day notice requirement.

Decision

After carefully reviewing this matter, we have decided to allow Mesa to terminate its service at Bridgeport at the end of the 90-day notice period, November 28, 1999, but to deny the carrier's request for termination prior to the end of the standard 90-day notice period because of the opposition from the community.

To ensure that funds are spent only for isolated communities, Congress has made communities that are within 70 highway miles of an FAA-designated medium or large hub ineligible to receive subsidized air service under the essential air service program. Bradley International Airport, a medium hub serving the Hartford area, is approximately 65 highway miles from Bridgeport; and La Guardia Airport, a large hub serving the New York City metropolitan area, is approximately 60 highway miles from Bridgeport. The community's proximity to either of those airports precludes the Department from paying subsidy for Mesa's continued service. Thus, we may not compel Mesa to continue to serve Bridgeport beyond the end of the 90-day notice period.

We will deny Mesa's request to suspend service early. The notice period ends on November 26, 1999. Absent compelling circumstances, long-standing program policy has been to grant requests for early termination only if we receive concurrence from the affected community or, at a minimum, a lack of objection. As noted above, however, Bridgeport objects to Mesa's early departure.

As a final matter, before Mesa terminates service at Bridgeport, we expect it to contact all passengers holding reservations for flights that will be affected, to inform them of the termination, and assist them in arranging alternative transportation.

This order is issued under authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.56a(f).

ACCORDINGLY

1. We take no action to prohibit Mesa Air Group, Inc., from terminating all scheduled air service at Bridgeport, Connecticut, effective November 26, 1999;
2. We deny the request of Mesa Air Group, Inc. for an exemption from 49 U.S.C 41731 *et seq.*, and waiver of the requirements of 14 CFR 323.3(a)(1) to the extent to permit termination of service on less than 90-days notice; and

3. We will serve a copy of this order on the Mayor of Bridgeport, the Manager of Sikorsky Memorial Airport, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and Mesa Air Group.

By:

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A. BRADLEY MIMS
Acting Assistant Secretary for Aviation
and International Affairs

(SEAL)

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