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## **Shuster Applauds Department of Transportation's Decision to Reselect Colgan Air for Service to Dulles**

*Washington, D.C.* – **Congressman Bill Shuster** today applauded the Department of Transportation's decision to reselect Colgan Air as the carrier to provide Essential Air Service (EAS) between Altoona-Johnstown and Dulles International Airport:

"I am pleased to have learned that Colgan Air will continue to provide its outstanding commuter service to Dulles International Airport," Shuster said.

"The commuter airline industry is not immune to the rising cost of fuel and historic spikes in jet fuel prices forced Colgan Air to renegotiate its contract with EAS. Thankfully, Colgan Air's track record of prompt and quality service led EAS to reselect them for this important connection service."

"The Airport Authority is pleased to hear that the Department of Transportation has approved the reselection of Colgan Air for this essential commuter route," said Don Ruggery, Chairman of the Blair County Airport Authority. "Congressman Shuster has been an asset in helping the authority expand the airport's operations and retain important business. Today's decision on Colgan Air is no exception in that regard. We look forward to Colgan Air's continued service to our area."

"This is tremendous news for the Blair County Airport," said Chuck Pillar, Airport Manager. "We have worked with Colgan Air over the years to build a popular commuter service and we continue to see an increasing number of passengers take advantage of this service. This announcement will allow the airport to continue to build its relationship with Colgan Air into the future and provide even greater service. I and the members of the Airport Authority thank Congressman Shuster for his long standing support of this route and the growth of Blair County Airport."

On March 28th, Colgan Air filed a 90-day notice with the Department of Transportation of its intent to terminate its contract to service Altoona and Johnstown with flights to Dulles effective June 28th because fuel costs made the route too expensive to run. Colgan's cancellation allowed EAS to solicit bids from other carriers to take over the route. Colgan Air and Gulfstream International Airlines entered the bidding process.

The Department of Transportation received a large amount of public support for Colgan Air and their reselection decision notes that since Colgan began its service to Dulles,

more passengers took advantage of the commuter service. Statistics showed that traffic in Altoona increased 67%, 95%, and 128% over the months of February, March, and April 2008, in relation to the same months last year.

These positive comments as well as EAS' own evaluation led to the reselection of Colgan Air to service Altoona and Johnstown through 2010 with 18 nonstop or one-stop round trips a week to Washington Dulles International Airport.

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