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Rep. Filner Announces Air Service Will Continue In El Centro

Congressman Bob Filner, a senior member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, has ensured that El Centro remains eligible to participate in the Essential Air Service (EAS) program.

"For many years, El Centro has received subsidized air service through the EAS Program, because airlines have repeatedly declined to serve the Imperial Valley without these subsidies," stated Congressman Filner. "The El Centro airport is critical to sustaining local jobs, and we must keep commercial airline service in the Imperial Valley. I am pleased that the FAA conference committee agreed to allow El Centro to continue to participate in the EAS program."

The EAS program, created as part of the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978, distributes Federal subsidies to air carriers for providing air service to and from many small communities that would not receive air service without the subsidies. This air service is necessary to link smaller cities to the larger airline system.

The House-passed FAA reauthorization bill would have eliminated the EAS program progressively through 2013, after which the program would have been eliminated everywhere except Alaska and Hawaii. The Senate bill would have extended the EAS program, but added certain restrictions to the program.

At the urging of Congressman Filner, the joint House-Senate conference committee agreed that communities currently participating in the EAS program would continue to be eligible. However, in the future, new entrants will need to meet more strict eligibility criteria