



**Senator Kohl and members of the Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights:**

My name is Tim Sheehy, president of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC). I am here today because our organization represents the interests of 1,800 member businesses with more than 300,000 employees throughout Milwaukee, Waukesha, Washington and Ozaukee counties – a significant base of the flying public.

On behalf of the members of the MMAC, thank you for this opportunity to provide our perspective on the proposed merger between Air Tran Airways and Southwest Airlines.

The Milwaukee Region has been fortunate to count efficient, hassle-free air service among its greatest assets. Air service is a key component of our infrastructure that underpins commerce and a connected, growing regional economy. Maintaining a high level of service, frequency of flights, number of non-stop flights and competitive pricing are all essential to retaining and expanding businesses that are located in Milwaukee, and to attracting new companies and jobs to the region.

The Milwaukee metro area ranks third in the nation for the number of Fortune 500 headquarters per capita. In total, 18 regional companies make the Fortune 1000 list. The region's business plan includes a focused strategy to bring additional foreign direct investment to the region. For these firms, like so many others, frequent air travel is a business imperative.

Mitchell International Airport offers 200 daily departures to 90 destinations, with direct service to all major U.S. business locations. On average, each flight at MKE generates

\$19.7 million of business revenue annually in the southeastern Wisconsin/northern Illinois area. Passengers can fly to approximately 55 destinations non-stop – a great advantage for a market the size of Milwaukee, especially for our business travelers to whom time is truly money.

Mitchell was recently named one of the fastest-growing airports in the nation by the Air Transport Association. In 2010, passenger traffic increased more than 40%. Milwaukee is bucking the trend in which mid-size cities are experiencing reductions in air service. This has largely been due to the fact that Air Tran and Frontier have been among the strong competitors for the region's business.

Average airfares out of Mitchell are lower than fares at 58 other U.S. airports, according to U.S. Department of Transportation statistics. Mitchell was also ranked in the top 10 small airports — those with fewer than 10 million passengers annually — in the latest customer satisfaction study by J.D. Power and Associates.

The bottom line: having more than one airline with a significant presence and commitment in Milwaukee is central to maintaining competition and service. We have seen the detrimental consequences in cities like Cleveland and Cincinnati, which have lost this competition.

Our member businesses have come to expect and appreciate the benefit of quality air service. Without it, the Milwaukee Region loses a key advantage. If Milwaukee loses that advantage, we ultimately become a less attractive location for business, resulting in the loss of business and jobs.

While it is clear that the merger of Air Tran and Southwest removes a competitor from the Milwaukee market, we must also consider the strength we gain with two strong, healthy airlines in Southwest and Frontier, as well as a number of additional carriers, moving forward.