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Southwest Airlines Customers Rally for New Flights Connecting Austin and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport

Liberty and LUV: Stakeholders Urge DOT to Approve Flights Between Capital Cities

DALLAS, April 4, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- Southwest Airlines (NYSE: LUV) this week filed comments reflecting the resounding endorsement of more than 12,000 petitioners, as well as dozens of community and political leaders, all of whom echo support for the carrier's application with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to offer nonstop service between Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. During a two-week period, thousands of visitors to southwest.com/aus registered their support of the application, which also details Southwest's proposal to provide one-stop, same-plane service between Washington National and San Diego via Austin. Recent federal legislation makes possible the proposed service by authorizing new flights to cities beyond Washington National's traditional 1,250 mile service perimeter.

"This outpouring of support reflects the need for Southwest Airlines to offer our low fares, new service options, and increased competition in these markets," said Gary Kelly, Southwest Airlines Chairman, President, and CEO. "Consumers will have all of this along with Southwest's Legendary Customer Service."

Current fares for connecting service between Austin-Bergstrom and Washington National are more than 50 percent higher than Southwest's average fare for the same distance, enabling Southwest to offer sharply lower prices to consumers on this currently un-served nonstop route.

This new nonstop service, if approved by the DOT, also would connect Washington National with other Southwest destinations such as Dallas Love Field and Houston Hobby—offering Customers low fare, connecting opportunities to and from Washington National via Austin. Southwest plans to operate the proposed daily Washington National-Austin-San Diego service utilizing Boeing 737-800 aircraft with 175 seats.

A decision by the DOT is expected in May, and Southwest is prepared to begin service this summer, provided Southwest's application is approved.

About Southwest Airlines Co.

Now in its 39th consecutive year of profitability, Southwest Airlines continues to differentiate itself from other low-fare carriers—offering a reliable product with exemplary Customer Service. Southwest Airlines is the nation's largest carrier in terms of originating domestic passengers boarded and has acquired AirTran Airways, now a wholly owned subsidiary of Southwest Airlines Co. Southwest serves 73 cities in 38 states and remains one of the most honored airlines in the world known for its commitment to the triple bottom line of

Performance, People, and Planet. To read more about how Southwest is doing its part to be a good citizen, visit southwest.com/cares to read the Southwest Airlines One Report(TM). Based in Dallas, Southwest currently operates more than 3,200 flights a day and has more than 37,000 Employees.

SOURCE Southwest Airlines