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Southwest Files Application To Operate Nonstop Service From Three Florida Airports To Cuba, Creating One-Stop Connections For Dozens Of U.S. Cities

Carrier files application with U.S. DOT to connect Havana with Ft. Lauderdale (Miami area), Tampa, and Orlando; Additional flights proposed between Ft. Lauderdale and other Cuba cities

DALLAS, March 2, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) (NYSE: LUV) filed an application today with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) requesting governmental approval to serve Cuba with daily nonstop flights from the carrier's three busiest airports in Florida: **Ft. Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL)**; **Tampa Bay International Airport (TPA)**; and **Orlando International Airport (MCO)**. The carrier applied to serve **Havana (HAV)** from all three Florida cities and additionally to serve **Varadero (VRA)** and **Santa Clara (SNU)** from Ft. Lauderdale (Miami Area). Upon approval, Southwest intends to initiate service to Cuba later this year. Click [here](#) to read Southwest Airlines' application for service to Cuba.

As part of the effort to bring low-fare competition and Customer-friendly travel options to Cuba, the carrier is asking Customers to take action and support Southwest's *Countdown to Cuba* by visiting [Southwest.com/Cuba](#) to sign a petition in support of Southwest's proposed Cuba service.

"We're ready to add Cuba to our route map and offer this emerging market Southwest's low fares, bags fly free with no change fees*, and our legendary customer service," said [Gary Kelly](#), Chairman, President & CEO of Southwest Airlines. "We carry more Florida travelers and more U.S. passengers every day than any other airline, and the service we're proposing aims to bring maximum value to the greatest number of potential Customers for Cuba air service."

**Southwest is the only major U.S. airline to offer bags fly free® to everyone (first and second checked pieces of luggage, size and weight limits apply; some airlines might allow free checked bags on select routes or in qualified circumstances), and there are never change fees, though fare differences might apply.*

Following its acquisition of AirTran Airways in 2011, Southwest expanded rapidly in the Caribbean and in Latin America, now serving a dozen destinations in the region. Southwest is on-schedule to complete a new, five-gate international terminal complex in Ft. Lauderdale. The \$295 million terminal will enable Southwest to operate up to 30 international departures per day. An essential component of the Company's FLL international service will be flights to Cuba.

Since beginning service to the state in 1996, Southwest has grown to serve eight airports in Florida and now carries more passengers within the state than any other carrier. Southwest opened three Florida cities in its first year of service: [Ft. Lauderdale \(Miami Area\)](#), [Tampa](#), and [Orlando](#). The following year, [Jacksonville](#) welcomed Southwest Airlines. [West Palm Beach](#) opened in 2001. [Ft. Myers/Naples](#) was added in 2005. Service to [Panama City Beach](#) and the new Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport began in May 2010, shortly after [Southwest dedicated Florida One](#), a Boeing 737-700 emblazoned with the Florida Flag as a tribute to loyal Customers and Employees in the Sunshine State. Southwest launched service to [Pensacola](#) in November 2013 and now flies nonstop to nearly fifty cities from Florida. In 2014, the carrier generated an estimated \$13.1 billion in economic activity solely within the state of [Florida](#).

Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

This news release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. Specific forward-looking statements include, without limitation, statements related to the Company's network and capacity plans, opportunities, and expectations. These statements involve risks, uncertainties, assumptions, and other factors that are difficult to predict and that could cause actual results to vary materially from those expressed in or indicated by them. Factors include, among others, (i) changes in demand for the Company's services and other changes in consumer behavior; (ii) the impact of economic conditions, fuel prices, actions of competitors (including without limitation pricing, scheduling, and capacity decisions and consolidation and alliance activities), and other factors beyond the Company's control, on the Company's business decisions, plans, and strategies; (iii) the impact of governmental regulations and other governmental actions related to the Company's operations; (iv) the Company's ability to timely and effectively maintain the necessary information technology systems and infrastructure to support its operations and initiatives; and (v) other factors, as described in the Company's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including the detailed factors discussed under the heading "Risk Factors" in the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended Dec. 31, 2015.

ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

In its 45th year of service, Dallas-based [Southwest Airlines](#) (NYSE: LUV) continues to differentiate itself from other air carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by more than 49,000 Employees to more than 100 million Customers annually. Southwest proudly operates a network of 97 destinations across the United States and seven additional countries with more than 3,900 departures a day during peak travel season.

Based on the U.S. Department of Transportation's most recent data, Southwest Airlines is the nation's largest carrier in terms of originating domestic passengers boarded. The Company operates the largest fleet of Boeing aircraft in the world, the majority of which are equipped with satellite-based WiFi providing gate-to-gate connectivity. That connectivity enables Customers to use their personal devices to view video on-demand movies and television shows, as well as nearly 20 channels of free, live TV compliments of our valued Partners. Southwest created [TransfarencySM](#), a philosophy which treats Customers honestly and fairly, and in which low fares actually stay low. Southwest is the only major U.S. airline to offer bags fly free® to everyone (first and second checked pieces of luggage, size and weight limits apply, some airlines may allow free checked bags on select routes or for qualified circumstances), and there are no change fees, though fare differences might apply.

In 2014, the airline proudly unveiled a bold new look: *Heart*. The new aircraft livery, airport experience, and logo, showcase the dedication of Southwest Employees to connect Customers with what's important in their lives.

From its first flights on June 18, 1971, Southwest Airlines launched an era of unprecedented affordability in air travel described by the U.S. Department of Transportation as "The Southwest Effect," a lowering of fares and increase in passenger traffic whenever the carrier enters new markets. With 43 consecutive years of profitability, Southwest is one of the most honored airlines in the world, known for a triple bottom line approach that contributes to the carrier's performance and productivity, the importance of its People and the communities they serve, and an overall commitment to efficiency and the planet. The 2014 Southwest Airlines One Report™ can be found at SouthwestOneReport.com.

Book Southwest Airlines' low fares online at Southwest.com or by phone at 800-I-FLY-SWA.

To view the original version on PR Newswire, visit: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/southwest-files-application-to-operate-nonstop-service-from-three-florida-airports-to-cuba-creating-one-stop-connections-for-dozens-of-us-cities-300229943.html>

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