Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 17, 2012

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Direct Air

Dear Secretary LaHood,

We write you today regarding the thousands of Western New Yorkers that are each out hundreds of dollars due to the malfeasance of Direct Air. We urge you to act swiftly to investigate the airline's activities that led to an abrupt and indefinite cancellation of service and clarify a pathway for refunds for customers who have not yet been made whole.

Direct Air first began flights between Niagara Falls International Airport and destinations in Florida and South Carolina in 2008. At the time, Direct Air was seen as a boon to the long underutilized airport which has recently undergone extensive renovations. Direct Air was seen as an affordable option for travelers both into and out of the region.

As you know, that service abruptly came to a halt in March amid claims that the airline was in serious financial trouble. Many customers have been left high and dry without any easy recourse to get a refund for flights that were cancelled, some with no notice. On top of this being a customer service nightmare, claims that Direct Air did not hold customer funds in an escrow account as directed by the Department of Transportation raises serious legal concerns.

As the regulator of charter air carriers and the arbiter for these complicated regulatory issues, we urge you to carry out a swift and comprehensive investigation of how this situation was able to occur and, most importantly, provide a pathway for Western New Yorkers to receive full refunds for cancelled flights.

We look forward to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,

BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress

KATHLEEN HOCHUL
Member of Congress

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