Memorandum

Date: January 19, 2021
To: FAA Office of Airports
From: Kay Ryder, Manager, Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Branch, APP-520
Prepared by: Terri A.R. Kett (202) 267-4374
Subject: ACTION: FY 2021 EAS/EDA Determinations

Purpose
The purpose of this memo is to provide the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 determination under Title 49 U.S.C. § 47109(f) Special Rule for Economically Distressed Communities (herein referred to as the “Special Rule”), which provides an exception to the 90 percent federal share for Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants at smaller airports (i.e. other than large and medium hub) that are receiving essential air service (EAS) and are located in economically distressed areas (EDA).

FAA Airports Regional Offices and Airports District Offices are encouraged to distribute this memo to the airport and consultant community. The listing of the FY 2021 EAS/EDA determinations is also available on the FAA Office of Airports website at: https://www.faa.gov/airports/aip/eas_eda/.

Determinations
The FAA makes an annual determination on which airports qualify for a 95 percent federal share for AIP grants under the Special Rule. For an airport to be considered for the Special Rule, the community where the airport is located must be included in the Department of Transportation’s (DOT) EAS listing and meet certain economic criteria determined from available federal data.

The DOT administers the EAS program and publishes list of subsidized EAS communities. For more information about the EAS program, visit the DOT website: https://www.transportation.gov/policy/aviation-policy/small-community-rural-air-service/essential-air-service

Based on the Special Rule, EDAs are determined through a series of computations based on unemployment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and per capita income data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The Special Rule applies when an area meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. The area has a per capita income of 80% or less of the national average.
2. The area has an unemployment rate, for the most recent 24-month period for which data is available, at least 1% percent greater than the national average.
3. The area has a special need arising from actual or threatened severe unemployment or economic adjustment problem resulting from severe short-term or long-term changes in economic conditions (as determined by the Secretary of Commerce).

Once the FAA determines an airport qualifies for the increased federal share, the airport will maintain that status for the entire fiscal year, regardless of any changes in EAS status or EDA data.

**Qualifying Airports**

The FY 2021 determination of airports meeting the Special Rule identified 95 qualifying airports, including four new locations, as EAS/EDA locations (see Table 1). All EAS/EDA airports will be eligible to receive a 95 percent federal share for AIP grants issued in FY 2021.

In FY 2020, 100 airports qualified under the Special Rule. Table 2 identifies eight airports that were on the list of eligible airports in FY 2020, but no longer qualify in FY 2021.

**Table 1: EAS Locations determined as EDAs** - Of the NPIAS airports designated by DOT as EAS communities, 95 are EDA locations.

* Indicates new EDA locations in FY 2021

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Table 2: Airports Qualified in FY 2020 that do not Qualify in FY 2021

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