



State Senator Harry Kennedy

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PRESS RELEASE



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Sen. Kennedy Advances Legislation Enabling Direct Missouri-Europe Air Corridor

Missouri Tourism Industry: 'You're Cleared for Landing'

Missouri State Senator Harry Kennedy (District 1) has successfully advanced a measure enabling the state's tourism industry to take advantage of soon-to-be completed international trade negotiations between the United States and the European Union.

The "Open Skies Trade Agreement" between the U.S. and the European Union is expected to open airports and flight routes between European cities and American destinations. The two parties are expected to sign off on the agreement on April 30, placing the agreement's provisions into effect in March of 2008.

Senator Kennedy, mindful that the deregulation of current air route assignments could enhance Missouri's tourism industry, drafted an economic development initiative exempting sales tax charges on aviation fuel purchased for transoceanic flights directly connecting to points across the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean. Currently no Missouri airport has direct flights to Europe. Originally introduced as a separate bill (SB 602), Sen. Kennedy successfully attached the provisions as an amendment to the Senate's version of House Bill 327.

According to the Missouri Department of Tourism’s website, domestic travelers to Missouri spent an estimated \$6.3 billion while visiting the state during fiscal year 2005. While figures aren’t currently available for the potential impact of opening a direct international flight in Missouri, the Denver International Airport commissioned a study that indicated *just one* additional daily flight from Europe had an annual economic impact of \$90,577,704. (The study, *Economic Impact of International Flights on Denver’s Economy* is available online at: <http://www.metrodenver.org/documents/Economic%20Impact%20of%20Intl%20Flights.pdf>)

Late last month, after addressing the public policy group of the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association (RCGA), Sen. Kennedy learned the RCGA’s airport working group, tasked with bringing international flights to St. Louis, had commissioned an economic impact study showing a daily flight to St. Louis from London with only 15 passengers (using a multiplier of 6) would have an annual economic impact of \$82 million for Missouri.

“All this potential and Missouri still doesn’t have any direct international flights – something my legislation could very well help change,” Sen. Kennedy said. “The Denver and St. Louis studies clearly illustrate the far-reaching economic benefits of international flights,” Senator Kennedy said. “My goal is to bring that economic reach and scope to Missouri.”

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