



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy A. Cooney

We can bring more nonstop flights to Rochester

JEREMY A. COONEY November 24, 2024



Op-Ed from Senator Cooney published in the Democrat & Chronicle on November 24, 2024

For the second straight year, our Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport (ROC) was named one of the best small airports in the nation.

ROC is a point of pride for our community and has recently added a number of sought after nonstop routes to Las Vegas, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, Charlotte/Concord and Raleigh. As we begin to enter the busy holiday travel season, now is the perfect time to build off of these new routes and think bigger and bolder about the kinds of nonstop flight options we could

see here in Rochester in the years to come.

Airlines typically decide direct flight routes based on passenger traffic. It's simple: If an airport is seeing more travelers, airlines will offer more flights. Every time we book a flight the airlines track not only the destination, but also where we are traveling from. So, when Rochesterians decide to fly out of an airport outside of ROC, the airlines take notice.

'Leakage' is the industry term for a passenger from one location who is willing to travel elsewhere to fly. Each year, ROC loses over 150,000 passengers to leakage, with travelers willing to drive to Buffalo, Toronto and cities even farther away. When this happens, however, the message the airline carrier receives is that they do not need to prioritize new routes or additional nonstop flights out of Rochester because they are still getting those passengers at other airports.

Nonstop flights provide an opportunity to connect Rochesterians to destinations across the nation, and also connect visitors to Rochester. New nonstop flights to Denver or Dallas/Fort Worth are within reach. We just need to send the message to the airlines that ROC is the place that we prefer to travel from. So the next time you're traveling and you have the option between Rochester or another upstate city, I hope you'll choose local.

State Sen. Jeremy Cooney is the chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee and represents the 56th District of New York.