

FAA grants Southwest approval for Hawaii flights

Southwest Airlines has received Federal Aviation Administration authority to fly passengers to Hawaii after the government shutdown delayed regulatory approval.

The FAA granted the carrier the extended twin-engined operations authority (ETOPS) required to operate the overwater flights, the airline adds.

“We’ll finalise our plans for offering service to Hawaii, and we’ll publicly announce our timing for selling tickets and inaugurating flights to the Hawaiian Islands in the coming days,” a spokesperson for Southwest says in a statement.

The FAA confirms the approval in a statement, adding, “as standard practice, we will increase our surveillance of its operations for six months as service begins”.

The Dallas-based airline had hoped to sell tickets for Hawaii flights before the government shutdown in January delayed the process. It aims to offer flights between Oakland, Sacramento, San Diego and San Jose, and Honolulu, Kahului, Kona and Lihue, it has said.

Earlier this month Southwest said it intended to conduct a validation flight from Oakland to Honolulu using a Boeing 737-800.

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