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Sunday, November 28, 2004

THE ROUTE TO CHINA

North American Airlines' bid for China route deserves isle support

**The airline promises routes
that stop in Honolulu if it
wins the flights next year**

By Johnson W.K. Choi

When Singapore Airlines stopped its direct flight service from Hong Kong to Hawaii in 1989, it created great inconveniences for both business and leisure travelers to come to Hawaii.

You can see a drop of Hong Kong visitors, including business executives, visiting Hawaii.

During the past 10 years, trade between United States and China has substantially increased.

Many businesses doing business with China preferred to set up their

offices in California, which has the comfort of many choices of daily direct flights to and from all major cities in Asia.

During the past few years, we have had discussions with many accounting firms and found that more Chinese businesses left Hawaii, especially after 9/11, due to the difficulties traveling to and from Asia (except Japan).

The required stopovers at one or more connection points is a common complaint by business travelers.

I have received a solicitation for support from North American Airlines to fly directly to Shanghai and Guangzhou. I do not know too much about the airline.

But I've heard about direct flights from Hawaii to China for more than 10 years with almost annual discussion with foreign carriers planning to start direct flights from China/Hong Kong to Hawaii.

It has become old news.

We believe an American airline willing to fly to Shanghai and Guangzhou direct from Hawaii makes more economic sense as domestic carriers are allowed to pick up and drop off passenger between U.S. cities (foreign carriers are not allowed to do so).

It is great news that Hawaiian Airlines intends to fly direct to China from Hawaii in 2006 -- but it is two years away. It is not as desirable since it planning to do the direct flights four times per week.

If North American Airlines is able to fly daily directly to Shanghai in 2005 and Guangzhou in 2006 it should be good news for Hawaii. It will also give business travelers better choices and cut down their travel time to/from Hawaii.

I am asking you to take a look at it and see if you can support their efforts.

Johnson Choi is president and executive director of the China.Hawaii Chamber of Commerce.

China.Hawaii Chamber of Commerce

hkchcc.org/

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