

Air France Plans To Relocate Scheduled Cargo Service From Shannon To Dublin Airport - Mayor Of Clare

Air France could be set to terminate its 20-year-old scheduled cargo service from Shannon International Airport, according to the Mayor of Clare.

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Councillor Patricia McCarthy has received confirmation from the airline that it plans to relocate its once-weekly service to Dublin while continuing to courier airfreight from the Clare airport to the Capital.

The Mayor explained that Air France is exploring the move following the decision by Singapore Airlines to end its 11-year-old freight services at Dublin Airport.

'The proposed ending of this service could prove damaging for Shannon as it currently provides the airport and surrounding industrial base with air cargo options unavailable at any other West of Ireland airport', indicated Mayor McCarthy.

Cllr. McCarthy explained, 'Air France claims that any plan to relocate the scheduled service, which carries an estimated 3000 tonnes of airfreight annually, is due to network reorganisation rather than specific airport issues. That will come as little consolation to Shannon's major global logistics firms and internationally trading companies, which rely on such services for the viability of their own operations.'

The Mayor said that Air France is the only cargo service at Shannon capable of carrying large cargo over transcontinental flying distances with fewer refuelling stops.

She continued, 'The airline's Boeing Jumbo 747 aircraft is capable of carrying freight of 20-30ft in length, significantly larger than any of the other Shannon-based operators. Each Saturday afternoon the service carries an average of 50 tonnes of airfreight to destinations worldwide, including Asia, Europe, and North and South America. To lose such a valuable direct service would have a detrimental effect on the surrounding region's international trading performance, which depends on Shannon's cargo services and facilities for timely access to their major markets.'

Commenting on the potential knock effects for employment at the airport should the service be relocated to Dublin, Cllr. McCarthy said, 'I am aware that it takes up to eight people to refuel and load/unload the Boeing 747 aircraft. Despite the presence of DHL, TNT, UPS and FedEx Express at Shannon, I fear that some jobs could be put at risk should Air France proceed with its relocation plan.'

'I would ask Air France to immediately clarify its intentions regarding its future operations at Shannon Airport. The facility's unrestricted runway, round the clock operation, efficient handling and the presence of major multinational firms nearby make it an ideal location for a scheduled airfreight service, which is why I cannot understand Air France's proposed move to an overly congested airport', concluded the Mayor.

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