

# House Transportation Committee

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

## Rural Aviation Updates

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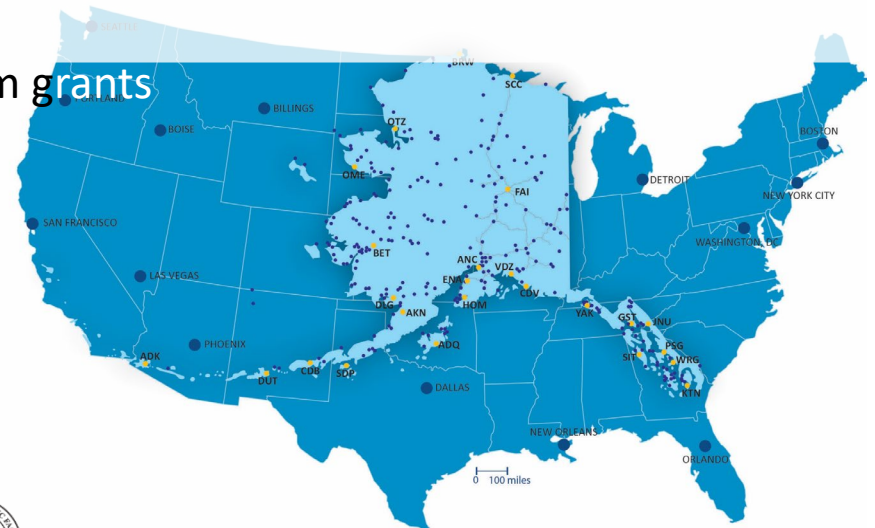
KEEP ALASKA MOVING

# Rural Airport System: What We Do

- Maintain 250+ State-owned rural airports and inspect 400+ airports
- Continuous snow and ice removal plus de-icing and surface friction management
- Lighting and electrical system inspections to maintain Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) operational standards
- Manage aviation land leases for hangars, fuel facilities, and aviation businesses
- Coordinate land use with community governments, airlines, and operators
- Procure and maintain specialized FAA-eligible snow removal equipment for rural airports
- Ensure airports comply with FAA airport standards and grant assurances
- Coordinate with Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and federal agencies where applicable
- Administer FAA Airport Improvement Program grants

## System Challenges

- Aging infrastructure
- Remote construction logistics
- Harsh climate conditions
- Workforce and operational demands



# Alaska Aviation Fact Sheet

**Alaska has 665,400 square miles of land and 2,427,971 square miles of airspace**

## **Pilots, Mechanics, & Aircraft**

- 10,343 active pilots
- 3,948 airframe and power plant mechanics of which 825 have inspection authorizations
- 8,947 registered aircraft

## **Airports**

- 777 registered landing areas
- 392 are public use airports (283 land-based, 105 seaplane bases, 4 heliports)
- 249 are included in the National Plan of Integrated Airports System
- 26 of which hold certificates under Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 139

## **Air Commerce**

- 5,275,750 enplanements

## **Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)**

- Recreation UAS: 2,068
- Part 107 UAS: 1,925
- Total UAS in AK: 3,993

# Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Funding

## Alaska's Aviation Capital Federal Funding

Year	AIP	BIL	Total
FFY2024	\$163.6M	\$81.2M	\$244.8M
FFY2025	\$215.8M	\$44.5M	\$260.3M
FFY2026	~\$200M	\$30M	~\$261.1M
FFY2027	\$260.3M	—	\$260.3M
<b>FFY26 Rural Airport System</b>	<b>\$197.8M</b>	<b>\$26.8M</b>	<b>\$224.6M</b>

## Rural Airport System

Year	Match Requirement
FFY2026	5% Non-Federal Match
FFY2027	6.25% Non-Federal Match

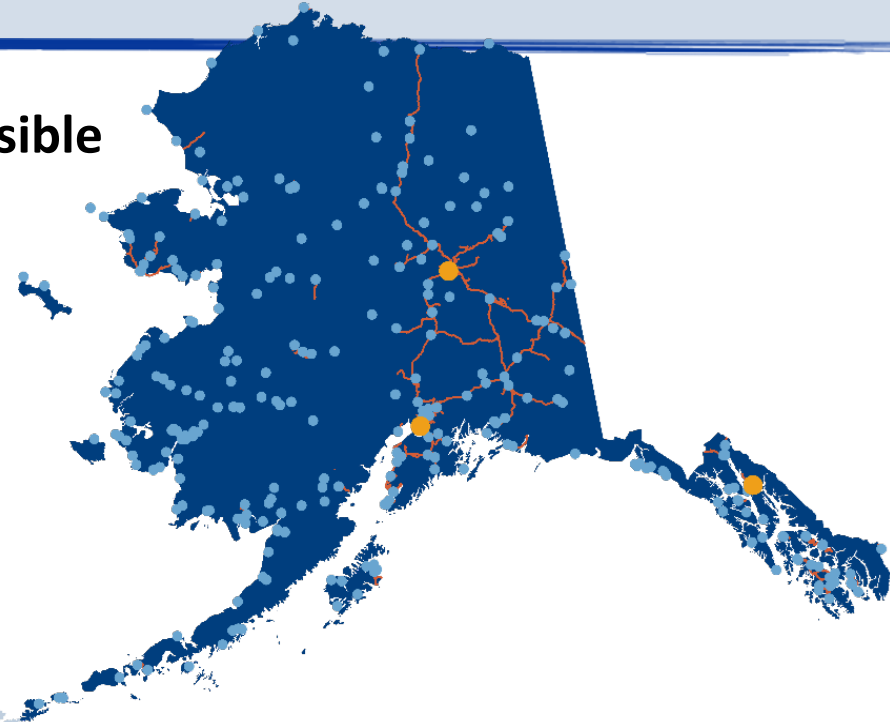
Essential Air Service (EAS) Airports remain at 5% Match of Project Eligible Costs.



# Upcoming Airport Projects

## NEW THIS YEAR - Early Start Provision Possible

- Noatak Airport Relocation
- Barrow Apron Culvert Replacement
- Ketchikan Terminal Expansion
- Talkeetna Airport Lighting Improvements
- Takotna Airport Improvements
- Kwigillingok Airport Safety Improvements
- Unalaska Airport Gate Replacement
- Nunam Iqua Airport Improvements
- Haines Resurfacing, Drainage, Lighting and Snow Removal Equipment Building (SREB)
- Tununak Airport Rehabilitation
- Bethel Taxiway, Apron, Fencing Improvements, and Service Road
- King Salmon Snow Removal Equipment Building Replacement
- Mountain Village Snow Removal Equipment Building Replacement
- Ketchikan Seaplane Ramp Relocation and Floats Removal



# Airport Terminal Projects

- Terminal Projects Federally Funded Through BIL, AIP, or Airport Terminal Program (ATP) Funds
- Two Terminal Projects in Coordination Between DOT&PF and Respective Boroughs, Through Co-sponsorship Agreements
  - **Sitka Terminal** Building Modifications
    - Construction Completion Fall 2026
  - **Ketchikan Terminal** Area Expansion
    - Currently in Construction
    - Phase 2 Funding Planned for FFY2026



# Maintenance and Operations: Airport Capital Program

Category	Funding	Activity
Snow Removal Equipment	\$17.6M	~32 equipment replacements
Surface Maintenance	~\$7M	27 runway maintenance grants
<b>Annual Need</b>	<b>~\$24.6M</b>	<b>Required to prevent backlog</b>



**Challenges:** Long lead times, Buy American waivers

# Statewide Aviation Operating Budget

SFY27 Governor Amended	
Operating Budget	
<b>Statewide Aviation Component</b>	<b>\$5,761.1</b>
Revenue	
<b>1004 General Fund</b>	<b>\$210.2</b>
<b>1027 International Airport</b>	<b>\$16.5</b>
<b>1061 Capital Improvement Program Receipts</b>	<b>\$157.6</b>
<b>1244 Airport Receipts</b>	<b>\$5,091.7</b>
<b>1245 Airport Other</b>	<b>\$285.1</b>
<i>\$ in thousands</i>	

# Airport Workforce

## Challenges

- Attracting equipment operators, mechanics, and electricians
- Airport training needs
- Increased airline operational hours (24/7 and overtime needed)
- Recruiting engineers for aviation project delivery

## Solutions

- Broad recruitment efforts
- Flexible work schedule options (1x1, 2x2)
- Contracting for services



# Don Young Alaska Aviation Safety Initiative Update

Alaska has an aviation accident rate about 2.4x higher than the rest of the US due largely to operating conditions and reliance on small aircraft.

Alaska contains only about 0.2% of the U.S. population but accounted for about 5.4% of fatal aviation crashes.

## **DYAASI (Don Young Alaska Aviation Safety Initiative) Eligible Infrastructure**

- Automated Weather Systems/Visual Weather Observation Systems (AWOS/VWOS)
- ADS-B (Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast) Ground Stations
- Runway Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Policy
- Runway Expansion for Economic Development
- Fuel Infrastructure for Snow Removal Equipment (SRE) – Section 702(2)(B)(i)
- Snow Removal Equipment Buildings (SREB)
- Crack Sealing & Runway Markings

# Rural Airport Lighting



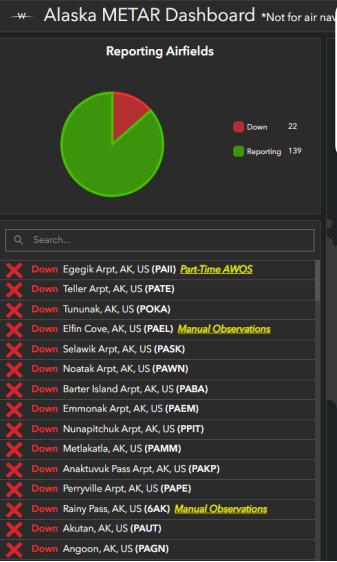
## Challenges

- 30 lighting systems greater than 30 years of age, and 40 systems that are over 20 years old
- 28 airports currently have lighting problems
- Lighting deficiencies include ski strip lighting, taxiway edge lighting, apron edge lighting, the rotating beacon, wind cone/segmented circle, new electrical equipment building
- Damage from vandalism and weather

## Solutions

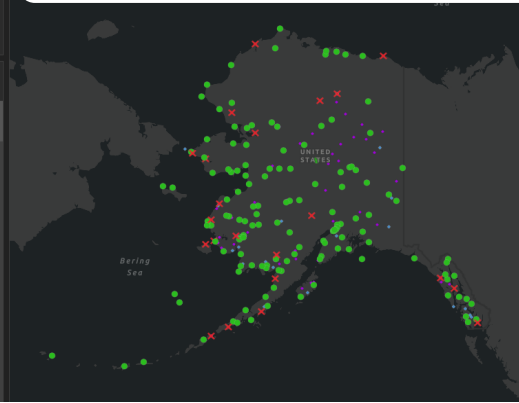
- Eight airport replacement projects underway
- Electrical training for current staff
- Cost effective emergency lighting systems
- Training, public outreach, and communication efforts

# Navigation Aids and Weather Reporting



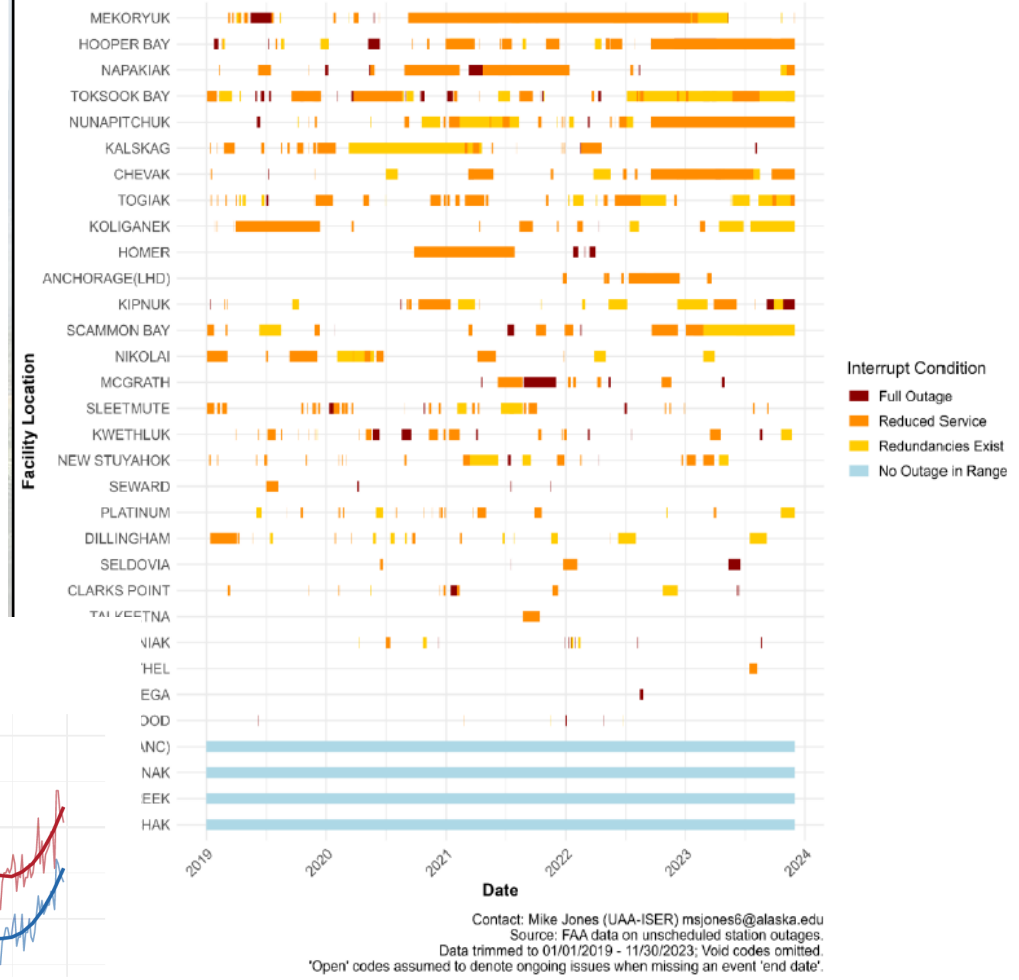
## DOT&PF Aviation and Airports

- AASP
- Alaska METAR Dashboard



## Alaskan AWOS/ASOS Outages by Region - Central

by descending sum of full + reduced service outage time

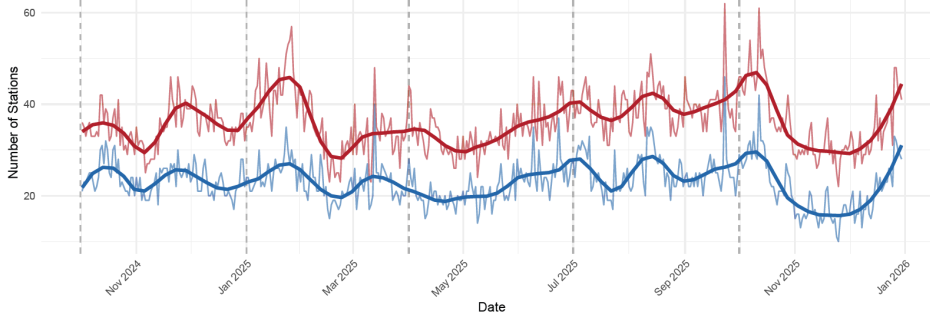


## Dashboard Snapshot: 3/10/26

### 1.2 Daily Outage Trends (Past 5 Quarters)

#### Daily Count of Stations with 2h+ Outages

Thin lines = daily count; Thick lines = smoothed trend; Dashed lines = quarter boundaries



Jones & Dyer: Alaska aviation weather infrastructure: outage patterns and strategic prioritization. UA Scholarworks.

11/19/2025



# Improving Weather Reporting Satellite Connectivity

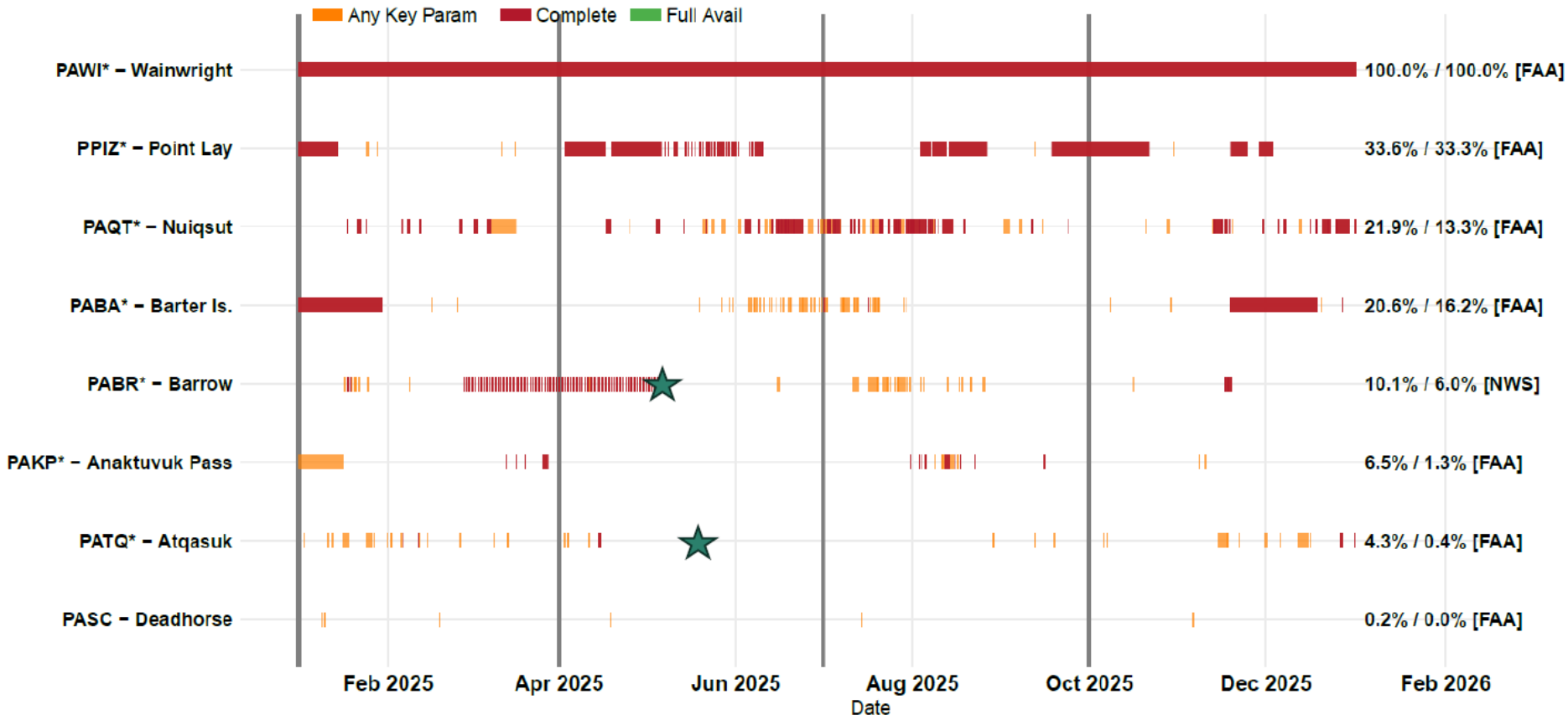
**FAA installing 44 AWOS  
and 50 VWOS over the  
next 2 years**

## 4.3.4 Four-Quarter Outage History

★ Starlink  
install date

### North Slope/Arctic – Four Quarter Outage History

Jan 01, 2025 to Dec 31, 2025 | Gray lines = quarter boundaries | (\*) = Off-road



# Navigation Aids (NA) at Night

“NA at Night” is a statewide and FAA safety and access initiative focused on ensuring that Alaska communities can safely and reliably access air transportation after dark, especially in rural and remote regions where aviation is the primary transportation lifeline.

- DYAASI funded \$1.5M Airport Site Assessment & Obstruction Planning project
  - **Priority 1** (High impact airports and low mitigation effort needed for 20:1 approach)
    - Akiak, Akutan, Atka, Chalkyitsik, Clarks Point, Eagle, Healy River, Hughes, Kalskag, Kokhanok, Napakiak, Nelson Lagoon, Nulato, Perryville, Sleetmute, Tatitlek, Venetie, Willow
  - **Priority 2** (Higher mitigation effort needed for 20:1 approach)
    - Central, Coldfoot, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Kobuk, Kotlik, Nenana, Nondalton, Ruby, Russian Mission, Shungnak
- The week of 3/1/26 Flight Checks were conducted and NA restrictions lifted; the following communities can now receive Medevacs at night: Togiak, Crooked Creek, Koliganek, Manley Hot Springs, Hooper Bay

# FAA Reauthorization

**The most recent reauthorization (2024) requires updates to FAA program guidance and administration.**

## **Upcoming AIP Handbook Updates**

- Align the AIP Handbook with recent FAA Reauthorization provisions and evolving airport program policies
- Reduce reliance on numerous Program Guidance Letters (PGLs) by incorporating permanent policy updates
- Clarify eligibility and administration for emerging priorities
- Improve consistency between AIP policy, grant assurances, and FAA Orders

## **Opportunity for OCONUS (Outside the Continental United States) -Specific Guidance**

Unique conditions in Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. Territories are not fully addressed in the current handbook framework. Potential approaches:

- OCONUS Appendix within the AIP Handbook
- Standalone OCONUS AIP Handbook or Supplement

# Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

## **Airport Badging, Identity Management System (18 airports)**

- Airport users must have a badge for every airport
- Requires two visits, one for fingerprints, one to finalize and issue the badge
- Takes more than two weeks on the average

## **Airport Hangars are also airport access**

- Requires the Airport Sponsor to have blueprints of every hanger to demonstrate airport security/access

## **Community Participation**

- ID checks, Real ID requirements; Most local Police Departments lack the staff to support all the requested information for the airport check point
  - ID adjudication
  - Ammunition and firearms at the checkpoint

## **Lack of funding and federal program to support Security requirements**

- Access controls, security sweeps, Law Enforcement costs, gate access controls

Regulations increase each year, inspection schedules change frequently and resources seldom increase to meet the demand

# Kodiak & Gustavus Part 139 LEO Duties & Requirements

Law Enforcement Personnel Standards — §1542.217

## Officer Requirements

### Airport operators must ensure that Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs):

**Arrest Authority:** Must possess the authority to make arrests with or without a warrant for crimes committed in their presence.

**Identification:** Must be clearly identifiable by a uniform or specific indicia of authority.

**Armament:** Must be armed with a firearm and officially authorized to use it.

**Training:** Must have successfully completed a training program that meets regulatory standards.

# Kodiak Law Enforcement Coverage

## Kodiak Vetted Options

All local avenues have been exhausted without success. Ruled out due to:

- **Coast Guard:** Arrest Authority Requirements
- **Local Trooper:** Resourcing Challenges – expansive area of responsibility
- **Local Public Safety Officer:** Outside Jurisdictional Boundaries/staffing challenges
- **Contracted Police Force:** Liability concerns and ability to secure arrest authority

The best available option is to utilize qualified officers from the Fairbanks International Airport team, rotating them to Kodiak. This provides the legal backing of a police force, and depth in coverage.

- ***Officers on three-day rotation***
- ***All overtime pay***

This model ensures trained officers are provided, uninterrupted commercial air service and avoids regulatory non-compliance and fines.

- Civil Violation is **\$17,000 per occurrence (can be multiple per day)**
- Loss of 14 CFR Part 139 designation (commercial) and associated federal funds

# Gustavus Law Enforcement Coverage

## Gustavus Vetted Options

All potential local avenues have been exhausted without success:

- **No Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO)**
- **No Local Police**
- **No Local State Trooper**
- **National Park Service (NPS):** Not within definition of emergency authority

The best available option is to utilize qualified officers in Juneau (retired) w/ special commission from the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, flying from Juneau to Gustavus each day:

- Typical 90-day window for Alaska Airlines seasonal flights
- Without officers, Alaska Airlines would not fly into Gustavus and Essential Air Service (EAS) subsidies under current contract is not possible
- Gustavus consequence, include:
  - **Subsidy Loss (\$191,000)**
  - **Civil Penalties**
  - **Expect significant harm to local government and businesses (economy)**

# Budget Breakdown & Program Considerations

## Kodiak and Gustavus Law Enforcement Coverage

### Kodiak

Item	Cost
Officer position (OT wages & benefits)	\$741,000
Hotel	\$76,000
Airfare	\$58,000
Per Diem	\$26,000
<b>Total Need</b>	<b>\$901,000</b>

### Gustavus

Item	Cost
Gustavus Officer Position	\$48,000
Airfare	\$22,000
<b>Total Need</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>

### Key Considerations

**Service Continuity:** Ensures TSA compliance and Alaska Airlines scheduled service into Kodiak and Gustavus

**Funding:** Funding from Southcoast Region Highways and Aviation budgetary component

# Typhoon Halong: Drone-Enabled Assessments



**50+** Communities impacted by two typhoon surge storms

**300+** Flight Missions

**20** Starlink Panels

**98,324** Images Collected

**540** Full Motion Videos

**34** Communities Mapped

**5TB** Raw Data Collected

**12** Go Pros 360

**1,300** Homes Assessed

**40** Public Facilities Assessed

**Over 40 DOT&PF Staff completed assessments for 34 communities in 3 days**

DOT&PF's drone team delivers rapid, agile response during crises—improving safety by deploying remote-operated drones that provide real-time, thermal imaging. This approach accelerates assessments, reduces costs compared to traditional aircraft, and expands equitable access to cutting-edge emergency response tools.

# Typhoon Halong: Logistics

**250+** DOT&PF Employees Statewide

**15+** Contractors Rebuilding Infrastructure

**15+** Transporters Delivering Critical Supplies

**55+** Suppliers

**100+** Local Hires Rebuilding Communities

**8,000,000+lbs** Materials Delivered to Date



Working through the **Statewide Emergency Operations Center**, in collaboration with State agencies, nonprofit and private partners, the Governor's Office, and federal agencies to restore transportation systems and assist affected communities

# Thank You.

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