

# *Alaska State Senate*

*Senator Forrest Dunbar*

**Session:**

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**SJR 20: WEATHER OBSERVING SYSTEM STATION OUTAGES**

Senate Joint Resolution 20 (SJR 20) is aimed at improving aviation safety in Alaska. Currently, weather observation systems across the state do not meet Alaska's daily need for air travel and freight shipping. The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities reported that 82% of communities in Alaska are not connected to the main road system. These communities rely on aviation for delivery of food, cargo, medicines, and critical care services.

Alaska has 109 Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) stations and 44 Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS) stations. Currently, these systems are experiencing frequent disruptions, posing risks to pilots and passengers. AWOS stations are older and rely on landlines to transport data through Service A systems. When these systems aren't functioning, dispatchers and pilots have no way of checking the weather conditions at their destination. These station outages and disruptions create risks to people having medical emergencies, delay medication delivery, and can prevent food from getting to communities in a timely manner.

Following a review by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), recommendations were made to improve aviation safety in Alaska. These include ensuring pilots have access to accurate weather updates and leveraging technology for collision avoidance.

SJR 20 urges the United States Congress to address the outages of these weather systems that are occurring in Alaska. Addressing these issues would improve aviation safety and ensure Alaskans have access to food, medicines, cargo, and medical services. I urge your support of SJR 20.