

**S J R**

**55**

IN MARCH OF 1989, THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE PRESENTED A PLAN TO CONGRESS TO MODERNIZE AND RESTRUCTURE THEIR OPERATIONS NATIONWIDE. WHILE THIS PLAN MAY UPGRADE WEATHER SERVICE OFFICES IN THE LOWER 48, IT WOULD VIRTUALLY CEASE PROVIDING ANY LOCAL WEATHER SERVICES THROUGHOUT RURAL ALASKA.

AS IT STANDS, THE PROPOSAL WOULD ELIMINATE 14 OF ALASKA'S 17 WEATHER SERVICE OFFICES, LEAVING ONLY THREE FORECAST STATIONS- LOCATED IN FAIRBANKS, ANCHORAGE AND JUNEAU- FULLY STAFFED. THIS PROPOSAL WOULD ELIMINATE THE WEATHER SERVICE STATIONS IN BARROW, KOTZEBUE, NOME, UNALAKLEET, MCGRATH, BETHEL, KING SALMON, ST. PAUL, COLD BAY, KODIAK, HOMER, VALDEZ, YAKUTAT AND ANNETTE ISLAND. MANY OF THESE STATIONS HAVE ALREADY HAD THEIR STAFFING REDUCED AND ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE ONLY THE MOST BASIC WEATHER SERVICES.

THE FISHERMEN, MARINERS AND AVIATORS OPERATING IN THE THOUSANDS OF MILES OF COASTLINE AND PRIME FISHING GROUNDS IN THE GULF AND BERING SEA, BRISTOL BAY, AND SOUTHEAST REGIONS WILL NO LONGER HAVE QUICK ACCESS TO UPDATED LOCAL WEATHER FORECASTS. NEITHER WILL THE AVIATORS WHO FLY TO THE REMOTE AREAS OF THE INTERIOR.

WEATHER SERVICE FORECASTS PROVED INVALUABLE THIS PAST SUMMER DURING THE CLEAN-UP EFFORTS FOLLOWING THE EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL WHEN AIR TRAFFIC IN THE PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND, NORTH GULF COAST AND KODIAK AREAS QUADRUPLED.

BY CONTRAST, THE NEXT LARGEST STATE, TEXAS, WILL HAVE NINE FULL SERVICE WEATHER STATIONS- 3 TIMES WHAT ALASKA WILL BE LEFT WITH

IF THE CURRENT WEATHER SERVICE PROPOSAL IS ACCEPTED,

AT THE URGING OF THE MANY ALASKAN COMMUNITIES WHO DEPEND ON THESE IMPORTANT WEATHER FORECASTS, THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE, THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET WHO DEvised THE PLAN-ARE CURRENTLY REVIEWING IT. THEY PLAN TO COMPLETE THEIR REVIEW BY THE END OF THIS MONTH. IF WE ARE TO IMPACT THE REVIEW PROCESS, NOW IS THE TIME.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE SEND THIS STRONG MESSAGE TO THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE THAT WE REJECT THE PROPOSED PLAN AND URGE THEM INSTEAD TO DEVELOPE A PLAN THAT WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE VITAL WEATHER SERVICES THAT ARE SO NECESSARY TO PRESERVE LIFE AND PROPERTY IN THE DIVERSE CONDITIONS EXISTING IN ALASKA.

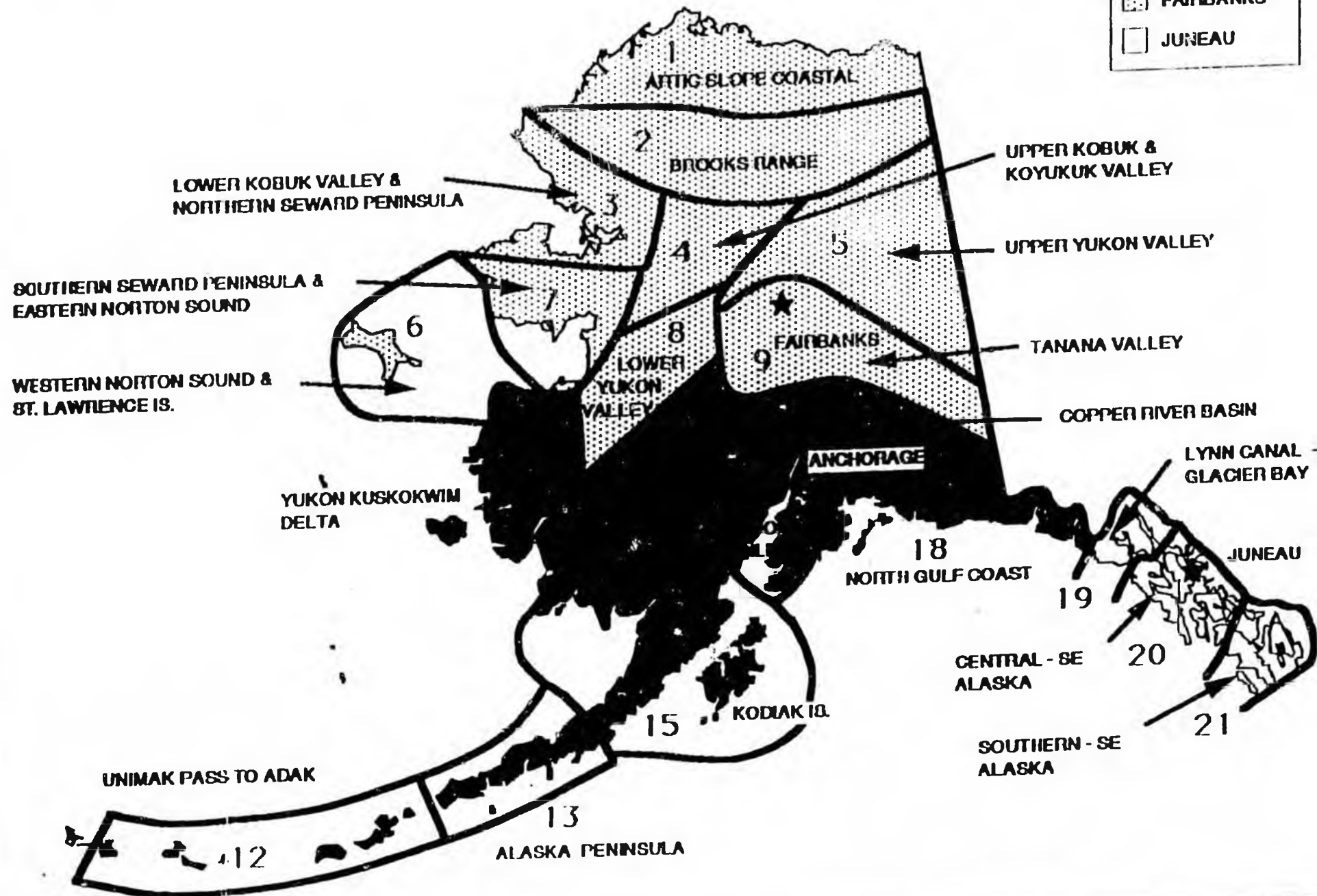
THIS RESOLUTION WILL SERVE TO INFORM THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE THAT ALASKANS ACROSS THE STATE INSIST ON A LEVEL OF SERVICE COMMENSURATE WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS WE FACE IN OUR TRAVELS AND DOING OUR WORK.

# ALASKA AREA FORECAST (FA) SECTORS

NOTE: FA AREAS EXTEND TO 100 MILES OFFSHORE

**LEGEND**

- ANCHORAGE
- FAIRBANKS
- JUNEAU



# **Ted Stevens**

## **United States Senator For Alaska**

October 26, 1989

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Press Office  
(907) 224-3200



### **STEVENS OPPOSES NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE PLAN FOR ALASKA**

A plan to modernize the National Weather Service nationwide would reduce rather than improve the forecasting information available to Alaskans, Senator Ted Stevens said today.

During a Senate Commerce Committee hearing on a major restructuring of the National Weather Service, Stevens noted that the plan would eliminate local forecasting services at 17 service stations in Alaska. The staff at those stations currently collect meteorological data for forecast stations in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau and provide local weather information for fishermen, pilots and other members of their communities.

National Weather Service officials today informed Stevens that the three forecast stations in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau would remain open and provide information to the communities that would no longer receive information from a service station.

Stevens questioned the ability of a forecaster in Anchorage to be able to match a local weather service staff person's ability to tell pilots about weather conditions.

"Now we're going to have the fellow who tells us it's all right to land ... is two mountain ranges and 1500 miles away. That's the distance from St. Louis to San Francisco. [Is a weather forecaster in St. Louis] going to tell the people in San Francisco you're clear to land?" Stevens asked.

Using a map showing Alaska superimposed over the lower 48, Stevens pointed out that the nation's largest state will not have an equitable share of National Weather Service offices under the modernization plan. While Alaska will be left with only three forecast stations, the second-largest state of Texas will have ten. A total of 112 forecast stations will be located in the lower 48 states, Stevens was told.

-BOB-

Stevens noted that the National Weather Service is required to certify that the proposed modernization will not cause a degradation of service. He suggested that certification will not be able to be made in Alaska, where residents rely on accurate forecasts for air and water transportation.

"If there's any place that's sensitive to your business, it's my state...", Stevens said. "Could you certify that this plan ...would not reduce the services to my people who rely on weather data?" Stevens asked Dr. Joe Friday, Assistant Administrator for Weather Services.

Friday said that based on Stevens' information, he would take a second look at the plan for Alaska.

Stevens also questioned the effectiveness of new radar that will be installed in Alaska under the modernization plan. The doppler NEXRAD radar cannot "see" over mountain ranges and therefore would offer only limited coverage in Alaska, Stevens said.

During today's hearing, Stevens read letters from Alaskans who oppose the National Weather Service modernization.

Kodiak mayor Bob Brodie wrote, "As the country's largest fishing port...it is vital that our fishing fleet and our many small plane pilots have the most complete weather information possible."

Local governments in Kodiak, Valdez and Gambell have passed resolutions in opposition to the modernization, Stevens said.

National Weather Service service stations are currently located in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Barrow, Kotzebue, Nome, Unalakleet, McGrath, Bethel, King Salmon, St. Paul, Cold Bay, Kodiak, Homer, Valdez, Yakutat and Annette Island.

Under the modernization plan, many of the stations will be automated. Personnel may remain at other stations. However, they will only send data to the forecast stations in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau. They will not provide local weather information or briefings to area residents.

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# HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(9)

Date Referred: February 14, 1990

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Date of Committee Action: 2/20/90

The RESOURCES Committee considered:

SJR 55

SENATE JOINT RES. NO. 55

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN ALASKA

Relating to the proposed restructuring of the National Weather Service in Alaska.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- [ ] be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] the same title  
[ ] a new title
- [ ] have attached amendment(s)
- [X] do pass
- [ ] do not pass
- [ ] no recommendation
- [ ] individual recommendations
- [ ] additional referral to the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

ADOPTS: \_\_\_\_\_ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(s):  
(Dept)

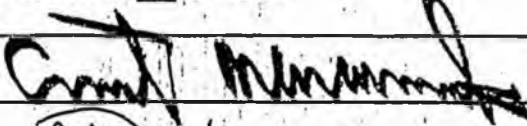
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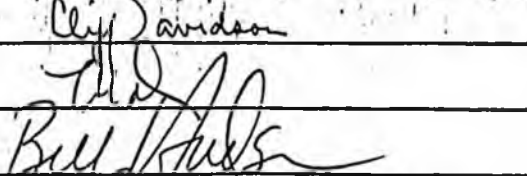
(Date/Dept)

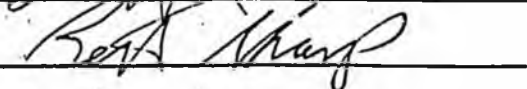
- [ ] fiscal impact \_\_\_\_\_
- [ ] zero fiscal note \_\_\_\_\_
- [ ] zero with analysis \_\_\_\_\_

- [ ] fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- [X] zero fiscal note(s) Senate DRNO. 1/24/90
- [ ] zero fn/analysis \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNING DO PASS:

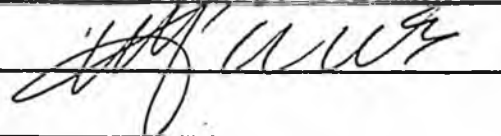
  
Cliff Davidson

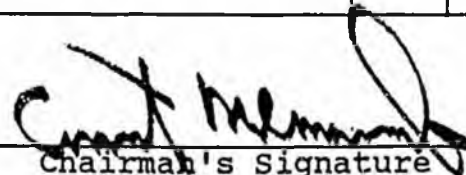
  
Bill Harris

  
Beth Ward

SIGNING:

(Check approp. column)

	Do Not PASS	No Rec	Amend
		X	

  
Chairman's Signature

# HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

2/14

(5)

Date Referred: February 2, 1990

FURTHER REFERRALS:

RESOURCES

Date of Committee Action: 2/13/90

The TRANSPORTATION Committee considered:

SJR 55

SENATE JOINT RES. NO. 55

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN ALASKA

Relating to the proposed restructuring of the National Weather Service in Alaska.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_  the same title
- be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_  a new title
- have attached amendment(s)
- do pass
- do not pass
- no recommendation
- individual recommendations
- additional referral to the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

ADOPTS: \_\_\_\_\_ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(s):  
(Dept)

APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Date/Dept)

- fiscal impact \_\_\_\_\_
- zero fiscal note \_\_\_\_\_
- zero with analysis \_\_\_\_\_

- fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- zero fiscal note(s) Senate Transp 1/24
- zero fn/analysis \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNING DO PASS:

SIGNING:  
(Check approp. column)

Do Not Pass No Rec Amend

SIGNING DO PASS:	SIGNING:	Do Not Pass	No Rec	Amend
<u>[Signature]</u> GERUSSENDORF				
<u>[Signature]</u> HUDSON				
<u>[Signature]</u> LEMAN				
<u>[Signature]</u> KUBINIA				
<u>[Signature]</u> EASTER				
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[Signature]  
Chairman's Signature

## FISCAL NOTE

**REQUEST:**

Revision Date: 1/23/90  
 Title: restructuring of the weather service in Alaska  
 Sponsor: Senator Zharoff  
 Requestor: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Affected: \_\_\_\_\_  
 BRU: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Components: \_\_\_\_\_

**EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)**

OPERATING	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96
PERSONAL SERVICES	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRAVEL	0	0	0	0	0	0
CONTRACTUAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUPPLIES	0	0	0	0	0	0
EQUIPMENT	0	0	0	0	0	0
LAND & STRUCTURES	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRANTS, CLAIMS	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>CAPITAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
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<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
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**FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)**

GENERAL FUND	0	0	0	0	0	0
FEDERAL FUNDS	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTHER	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**POSITIONS:**

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

**ANALYSIS :** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Prepared by: Senate Transportation Committee Phone: 465-3743  
 Division: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 1/23/90

Approved by Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Agency: Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_

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