

SJR

14

Alaska State Legislature

Out of Session:
PO Box 531
Golovin, Alaska 99762
(907) 443-5599

In Session:
State Capitol, Suite 510
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(800) 597-3707
(907) 465-3707
(907) 465-4821 Fax

SENATOR DONALD C. OLSON

DISTRICT T

Alakanuk
Ambler
Anaktuvuk Pass
Atkasuk
Barrow
Brevig Mission
Browerville
Buckland
Chevak
Deering
Diomedea
Elim
Emmonak
Gambell
Golovin
Hooper Bay
Kaktovik
Kiana
Kivalina
Kobuk
Kotlik
Kolzebue
Koyuk
Mountain Village
Noatak
Nome
Noorvik
Nuiqsut
Nunam Iqua
Pilot Station
Pitka's Point
Point Hope
Point Lay
Savoonga
Scammon Bay
Selawik
Shaktolik
Shishmare
Shungnak
St. Mary's
St. Michael
Stebbins
Teller
Unalakleet
Wainwright
Wales
White Mountain

4/23/04

To:
Representative Morgan, Chair
House Community and Regional Affairs Committee

From:
Sen. Olson

H.H. for D.O.

Re: SJR 14 FAA Flight Service Stations

I respectfully request a hearing for SJR 14 in the House Community and Regional Affairs committee at your earliest convenience. I have attached my sponsor statement and supporting information. Please contact me if you need additional information.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

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Sponsor Statement

SJR 14, FAA Flight Service Stations

SJR 14 is a resolution requesting the Federal Aviation Administration to fully staff and maintain its flight service stations in Alaska.

Alaska is a vast state that relies on air transportation for much of its commerce and connectivity. A substantial portion of the State of Alaska does not have the road infrastructure to facilitate the transport of freight and the movement of people.

Furthermore, coastal and river communities in Western, Central, and Northern Alaska lose their marine transportation alternative during the 5 to 8 months of winter ice conditions. These communities then are solely dependent on air transportation for travel, goods and emergency services for a substantial part of the year.

Furthermore, there is a large number of Alaskans that own and fly airplanes. Indeed, Alaska has the highest percentage of general aviation users per capita in the United States. General aviation users depend on FAA flight service stations to inform them of runway closures and conflicting runway traffic.

FAA flight service stations are essential for the continued safety and dependability of Alaska's vital air transportation network. Both commercial and private pilots are totally reliant on the expertise and competence of FAA's flight service personnel. The state of Alaska has over 180 airports that depend on flight service stations for weather updates, runway conditions, and assistance with safe air travel.

I respectfully urge your support for this resolution, helping to ensure the safety of air travel in Alaska.

Subject: [Fwd: SJR14 FAA FSS]

Date: Mon, 07 Apr 2003 11:30:30 -0800

From: Senator Donny Olson <Senator_Donny_Olson@Legis.state.ak.us>

Organization: Alaska State Legislature

To: Haven Harris <Haven_Harris@legis.state.ak.us>

Subject: SJR14 FAA FSS

Date: Sun, 6 Apr 2003 13:57:10 -0500

From: "Mary Ellen Cunningham" <maryelen@starband.net>

To: Senator_Thomas_Wagoner@legis.state.ak.us, Senator_Gene_Therriault@legis.state.ak.us,
Senator_Georgianna_Lincoln@legis.state.ak.us, Senator_Donny_Olson@legis.state.ak.us,
Senator_John_Cowdery@legis.state.ak.us

CC: Senator_Johnny_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us

It was just brought to my attention that on Monday 10 April 2003 the Senate Transportation Committee will be hearing testimony on SJR14 FAA FSS. I am currently on rotational travel from the Kenai AIFSS to the Dillingham FSS, so I will not be able to call in. I have thus copied quotes from both the National Association of Air Traffic Specialists (NAATS) and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA).

Mary Ellen Cunningham
1539 Toyon Way
Kenai, Alaska 99611-7926

maryelen@starband.net

ENA 907-283-0206
DLG 907-842-5626

NAATS

Federal Aviation Administration
Plans to Contract Out U.S. Air Traffic Control
Services To The Lowest Bidder

The Air Traffic Control system in the United States is the largest and safest in the world. Our system is the envy of all nations. It has been carefully designed to ensure that tragedies like the one in Switzerland this year -- a collision between two airlines -- will not happen here. Ensuring the safety and security of its citizens is the clearest mandate the federal government has. It is clearly an inherently governmental function. But the FAA has already compromised safety by contracting out air traffic control towers at smaller airports and the installation and maintenance of flight-critical navigation equipment.

The FAA plans to continue to sell additional Air Traffic Control services by privatizing the functions of Flight Service Controllers. One

only needs to look to Europe's and Canada's results to see how this will turn out. Nationalization and privatization of these services have been an expensive and inefficient failure by any standard. Europe's system is now so complicated and expensive, only the wealthiest can fly their own planes and airline passengers pay excessive premiums for the European Community's commercialized Air Traffic Control. American Flight Service Controllers provide critical weather and aeronautical information to our nation's pilots. They also played a major role in managing the National Airspace System on 9/11. As the Air Traffic Control services slowly returned, amidst the confusion and complexity of new, more detailed security requirements, FAA Flight Service Controllers responded with professionalism. Aviation safety and security of the national Airspace System were never compromised.

The events of 9/11 demonstrated that safety and security should never be compromised. However, the FAA has set the wheels in motion to privatize your Air Traffic Control system. Small towers were the first to go, followed by aviation systems. Now, Flight Service Controller duties will be sold to the lowest bidder with no system announced as of yet to monitor safety and security. Left unchecked, the FAA will sell safety and security all the way to the next mid-air collision.

NATCA

Bush Administration - Outsourcing
Ever after the tragic events of September 11, the Administration remains firm in its commitment to contract over 400,000 federal jobs to the private sector and to mandate A-76 competitions for half of the positions listed on the FAIR inventories. The Office of Management and Budget has directed federal agencies to open up at least five percent of commercial jobs to contractor competition in FY02 and ten percent in FY03, with the goal of eventually reaching 50 percent of commercial jobs. NATCA opposes the Bush Administration competitive outsourcing initiative that sets arbitrary quotas for federal agencies and provides incentives to meet those quotas.

The OMB will rely on accurate FAIR Act lists provided by agencies that identify jobs that are commercial in nature. In addition, agencies are being required to submit lists of inherently governmental jobs. OMB intends to scrutinize these lists, which are due on June 30, to ensure that jobs are properly classified.

Subject: * SJR 14 *****

Date: Sun, 6 Apr 2003 20:32:23 -0700 (PDT)

From: Tim <timbeaux12002@yahoo.com>

To: haven_harris@legis.state.ak.us

Honorable Members of the Senate Transportation Committee,

My name is Tim Fowler. I am one of over 200 devoted men and women working in Alaska's Automated Flight Service Stations. Alaska's Automated Flight Service Stations provide the Alaskan aviation community with essential weather, aeronautical data and interpretation, and provide support and service to the private and public support infrastructure of the Alaskan aviation community. We assist pilots before and during their flights to help them make critical and often life saving decisions. In addition, we initiate, conduct, and assist in searches for missing and overdue aircraft. Unlike any other state, Alaska is dependent upon aviation for our way of life and in many instances our very existence. Whether it is assisting Alaska bush pilots, air ambulance flights, commercial operators flying people and supplies over rugged terrain often in the worst of weather or assisting our military in matters of national security; Alaska's Flight Service Stations provide an invaluable service that is intimately related to the public interest.

Unfortunately, the FAA continues to allow the degradation of these services in Alaska. Staffing levels are falling dangerously low, funding is being cut on a regular basis and necessary equipment is often in a state of disrepair.

Additionally, an A-76 study that may privatize each and every Automated Flight Service Station in the lower 48 within the next few years, is currently being conducted. Alaska is exempt from this current study, but if successful, the Federal government could soon set their sights on Alaska Flight Service Stations, resulting in fewer Alaskan jobs, and less income to those who staff Flight Service jobs. Degradation in service to the aviation community, less money for the Alaskan economy, and ultimately, an untold rippling effect through the entire state in service and expense to each and every Alaskan are likely possibilities. It is my belief that SJR 14 would send a strong clear message, and show early support against any efforts by the Federal government in the future to privatize Alaskan Automated Flight Service Stations.

We feel that with your support, "SJR 14" would send a very strong message to the Federal government and the FAA expressing our resolve to maintain only the highest degree of aviation safety in Alaska

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Sincerely,

Tim Fowler

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Subject: SJR 14

Date: Sat, 05 Apr 2003 18:10:00 -0900

From: Mike Evans <frostbite@gci.net>

To: haven_harris@legis.state.ak.us

Honorable Members of the Senate Transportation
Committee,

My name is Mike Evans and I work at the Fairbanks Automated Flight Service Station. It is one of 14 Flight Service Stations that provide pilots with essential weather and aeronautical data and interpretation before and during their flights to help them make critical and often life saving decisions. As you know, Alaska is dependent on its aviation community more than any other state in the union. This was evident right after the attacks of Sept 11, 2001 when we passed the word to all pilots, commercial and private to land immediately or risk interception by the military. If it had not been for the Flight Service Controllers it would have been more of a nightmare than it was. As you know it pretty much shut down most services, ie: mail, food, fuel delivery for the state.

Unfortunately, the FAA, in it's ultimate wisdom, continues to allow the degradation of the services provided by the Flight Service Stations in Alaska. Staffing levels are falling dangerously low, funding is being cut on a regular basis and necessary equipment is often in a state of disrepair. We are still using 1970's era equipment and technology. Up to date equipment and technology is slowly being installed in the lower United States, but it won't reach Alaska Flight Service Stations for several years and most of it is at least 5 or more years old technology and still has a few teething problems.

Fairbanks AFSS is losing 2 controllers in the next two months to retirement and possibly 3-4 more to transfers by the end of the year. Fairbanks AFSS has only received 3 Flight Service Controllers within the past 12 months and these were in service transfers. Although the FAA administered an Air Traffic Controllers exam earlier this year, the FAA has put a hiring freeze on due to the current world situation and we have no idea when it will lift.

I feel that with your support for "SJR 14" will send a very strong message to the Federal government and the FAA our resolve to maintain the best possible service and the highest degree of safety in Alaska.

Thank you,

Mike Evans

Subject: SJR-14 Support Flight Service

Date: Sat, 05 Apr 2003 01:22:58 -0500

From: PMAmes8@aol.com

To: haven_harris@legis.state.ak.us

Hi Donnie,

I would like to thank you for sponsoring SJR-14 supporting the Flight Service in Alaska and keeping it 'inherently governmental'.

Thanks for all your great support of the FSS's and your initiative to get this resolution passed. I hope this trend can continue into the lower 48 as well.

I know the rest of us here at Nome FSS support you whole-heartedly. If there is anything we can do to help, let me know.

Margaret Ames
Nome FSS 443-2502

Subject: SJR- 14

Date: Thu, 03 Apr 2003 08:32:25 -0900

From: Charleen <ccajun@gci.net>

To: haven_harris@legis.state.ak.us

CC: retrofed@acsalaska.net

Dear Senator Don Olson.

My name is Charleen Hollier. I am a devoted and proud Flight Service Station employee working in the Fairbanks, Deadhorse and Burrow, Alaska Flight Service Stations. I provide pilots with not only essential weather and aeronautical data and interpretation before and during their flights to help them make critical and often life saving decisions but I am the eyes and ears that helps that pilot make it into the airport when the weather is bad. Unlike any other state, Alaska pilots are dependent upon Flight Service Station Specialists. Whether it is assisting the Alaska bush pilots, or the air ambulance flights and commercial operators flying people and supplies over rugged terrain often in the worst of weather or assisting our military in matters of national security; Alaska's Flight Service Stations provide an invaluable service that is intimately related to the public interest of safety. I talk to bush pilots and state employees who maintain the states runways everyday. I update them on the proposed "future" of Alaska Flight Service and the feedback I get back is this: "We won't feel safe flying out here without you, we need your eyes and ears to help us". Taking us away/reducing staffing personnel and hours of operations means pilots and state employees will be more fearful of their lives.

Unfortunately, the FAA continues to allow the degradation of these services in Alaska. Staffing levels are falling dangerously low, funding is being cut on a regular basis and necessary equipment is often in a state of disrepair.

We feel that with your support, "SJR 14" would send a very strong message to the Federal government and the FAA expressing our resolve to maintain only the highest degree of aviation safety in Alaska.

Thank you for your time,

Charleen Hollier

Subject: SJR-14

Date: Thu, 3 Apr 2003 10:00:34 -0800 (PST)

From: dennis carman <astroboy483@yahoo.com>

To: haven_harris@legis.state.ak.us

Senator Olsen,

I have been following the news and I'm looking forward to reports that SJR-14 has been passed by the Alaska Legislature.

Aviation in Alaska is vital. It is difficult to emphasize how vital to someone who has not experienced the distance and transportation hurdles some Alaskans face to eat and heat their homes. The government support must not be allowed to decrease. Safety and human lives are literally are first casualties if SJR-14 is not approved.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Dennis Carman

613 Fir Drive

Kenai, AK 99611

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SJR14.

Subject: SJR14

Date: Thu, 03 Apr 2003 14:37:35 -0900

From: connie cloud <ccloud@gci.net>

To: haven_harris@legis.state.ak.us

I want to thank Senator Olson for supporting SJR14 in support of the Alaska Flight Service Stations. As a pilot and a FSS employee I know the value these station provide.

Thanks again for the support

Connie Cloud
pob 71208
Fairbanks Alaska 99707
ccloud@gci.net

Subject: SRJ-14

Date: Fri, 04 Apr 2003 00:09:35 +0000

From: "steve kelsey" <skelsey@hotmail.com>

To: haven_harris@legis.state.ak.us

To Honorable Senator Don Olson,

My Name is Steve Kelsey. I am the Kotzebue flight Service Station Union Facrep. Needless to say the Current A76 Study to Privatize flight Service is more than a little bothersome. There are currently 9 Air Traffic Control specialists stationed to Kotzebue Flight service. We are all glad to see the introduction of bill SRJ-14. I would like to pledge our full support for the bill. Aviation Safety is not for Sale in Alaska. Thank You for your efforts on this important Matter.

Steve Kelsey
NAATS Facrep OTZ FSS

Help STOP SPAM with the new MSN 8 and get 2 months FREE*
<http://join.msn.com/?page=features/junkmail>

Subject:

Date: Thu, 3 Apr 2003 15:12:48 -0900

From: john.newell@faa.gov

To: haven_harris@legis.state.ak.us

Senator Don Olson,

I am an Air Traffic Controller at the Juneau Automated Flight Service Station and I am asking you to not only support SJR-14 on saving Flight Service Stations in Alaska, but to help promote SJR-14.

Flight Service, and the safety of the flying public should not be compromised just so private companies can take over inherently governmental jobs.

I have lived in Alaska for over 35 years and have worked in Flight Service for 15 of these. My years of commitment to Alaska and Alaska's flying community is typical of the average Flight Service Station Air Traffic Controller. To ask a private company to move up to Alaska from the lower 48 and try to provide this level of service and experience would prove to be costly to the Alaskan people in not only dollars, but lives!

So once again I urge you to help support SJR-14.

Thank you,

John Newell
Juneau Alaska

Subject: SJR-14

Date: Thu, 03 Apr 2003 16:42:49 -0900

From: Mark Boberick <naatsak1@ptialaska.net>

To: <haven_harris@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Senator Olson,

I am writing to encourage your support and efforts on behalf of SJR-14. I have invested the better part of my adult life in service to Alaska's flying public as an air traffic controller. The FAA needs to hear from our legislature that the further reduction or elimination of Alaskan Flight Service Stations will result in a serious degradation of aviation safety.

Thank you again for your efforts.

Mark Boberick
Fairbanks
Air Traffic Control Specialist

Subject: SJR-14 /A-76

Date: Thu, 03 Apr 2003 19:21:09 -0900

From: WTyson <wtyson@pci.net>

To: haven_harris@legis.state.ak.us



Senator Don Olson

It has been brought to my attention that you are sponsoring SJR-14. I can't begin to express my appreciation for your support of Flight Service in Alaska. After the passage of your bill helps ensure flight safety in Alaska, we can only hope it will be the springboard needed to do the same in the lower 48 by shutting down the A-76 study. Your support will not be forgotten.

William A. Tyson
Air Traffic Specialist, Fairbanks Automated Flight Service Station

I support SJR-14

Subject: I support SJR-14

Date: Fri, 04 Apr 2003 00:02:22 -0900

From: "Jeffrey C. Thompson" <jqar80a@gci.net>

To: haven_harris@legis.state.ak.us

Senator Don Olsen,

I support the passage of SJR-14. I am a current Alaska resident, have lived in this state since 1964 and have been involved with aviation in Alaska since 1980.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Thompson
1820 Esquire Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

email: jqar80a@gci.net