

Legislation

asks air competition

Senator Ted Stevens introduced legislation designed to insure competitive air service to southeastern and northwestern Alaska which have no alternative modes of transportation.

"Isolated rural communities in Alaska and elsewhere in the country depend entirely on air service for transportation out of their localities," Stevens said. "Competition is important to assure adequate air service in the absence of railroads and highways."

The bill is a response to two CAB decisions relating to the Alaska Service Investigation which created monopoly situations in air service to southeastern and northwestern Alaska including Anchorage, Nome, Kotzebue and Unalakleet.

"These decisions were not in the public's interest. In its attempt to strengthen the financial prospects of Alaskan air operations, the CAB did not give enough weight to the commerce, postal and national defense needs, or to the public's transportation needs," he said.

The present status of Alaska's economy, stimulated by the North Slope oil development and the Native Claims Settlement Act, demands increased air service, not less, Stevens said.

The senator's bill would require the CAB to consider whether alternate types of transportation are available when authorizing air service to communities. The CAB would have to provide for at least two air carriers in areas not serviced by railroads or highways.

Also under the Steven's bill, additional air carriers to such areas would not have maximum subsidy limits and would be assured subsidies when needed to continue operations there.