

Stevens Introduces Bill to Ensure Competitive Air Service

Sen. Ted Stevens last week 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 services in the absence of railroads and

(Continued on Page 9)

Competitive Air...

(Continued from page 3)

highways."

The bill is a response to two CBA decisions relating to the Alaska Service Investigation which created monopoly situations in air service to southeastern and northwestern Alaska, including 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 Civil Aeronautics Board did not give enough weight to the commerce, postal and national defense needs, or to the public's transportation needs," he said.

The senator pointed out that the CAB's decision was particularly untimely for the northwest area which was hit with severe flooding last fall.

"These Alaskans are now rebuilding. Food, supplies, and construction materials are needed. The only means of

transporting these materials and foodstuffs during the winter months is by air. This entire emergency situation has been put on the capabilities of only one airline," he said.

Stevens said the North Slope oil development and the Native Claims Settlement Act also have stimulated the economy and increased the demand on air service in these areas.

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

The senator's bill would require the CAB to take into consideration whether alternate modes 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.