

Short season no good for subsistence

Tundra Times
P.O. Box 1287
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Alaska Airlines discriminates?

Box 101
Tanana, Alaska
99777
December 6, 1977

Dear Sir:

After attending AFN Convention in Anchorage, it was mostly about subsistence in Alaska and also in Canada. Subsistence is getting to be big problem all over the state. Without hunting, trapping and fishing in villages, we have a hard time in villages.

Subsistence is high priority in Alaska. So we must protect subsistence hunting and fishing. With limited hunting and fishing we don't get what we want. For example, in our village of Anaktuvuk Pass last fall Fish & Game put limit on caribou. One caribou per license hunter. Boy, when people heard that they were upset because one caribou don't last long up here. Also caribou is our main source in our village. Other than caribou we don't have other mammal or fishing to depend on.

We need to get more than one caribou per hunter because we need meat, skins year around. We need lots of clothes and meat to keep us going because the prices on grocery is high and fuel oil is very high, when temp goes to 50 to 60 below we have to keep warm somehow.

I like to see each village get what they want on hunting and fishing. Also in hunting and fishing in villages, we need longer season. This short season is no good.

Would appreciate it if you printed this.

Sincerely,
Raymond Paneak

Mr. R. Cosgrove, President
Alaska Airlines
Seattle-Tacoma Airport
Seattle, Washington

Dear Mr. Cosgrove:

On November 10, 1977, at 6 pm, while traveling with Alaska Airlines from Fairbanks to Anchorage, I attempted to pay my fare with a personal check. However, I was informed that my check was not acceptable. According to the ticket agent, although my name is not on a bad check list, she could not accept my check because I do not have a major credit card in addition to my other ID. (I had driver's license, union card and tax exempt card.) Also, I was told that because I was not employed at this time they could not even reconsider my check. With this letter I want to make you aware of the inconvenience and humiliation you caused me.

First of all, by requesting major credit cards your company is making checking worthless. I do not have a credit card because I do not want one, and I do not want to duplicate the paid services the checking account is supposed to offer. As for the unemployment, I am employed out of operating engineers and happen to be on R and R at the time of this incident. Alaska construction, as well as other types of employment like commercial fishing, trapping and fire fighting, is largely seasonal—not daily like the forty-hour white collar worker. Not being employed at this time does not mean my check is going to bounce.

In the past I have been satisfied with Alaska Airline's service and competence. I have gone out of my way to fly with Alaska Airlines. In addition, being a Local 302 union member for years, I prefer not to cross the Wien pilot's picket line. However, this latest rule forces me to travel with other airlines, as I do not intend to get a credit card and I do not want to carry cash.

Furthermore, I wonder if there is any discrimination involved. Most Native people from the village, like me, do not have credit cards and do not need or want them. But many use checking accounts so they do not have to carry cash. Cash is so easily stolen, according to the Fairbanks news. Maybe if I had looked and talked like a Texan the ticket agent could have accepted my check without a credit card.

In summary, I think you are actually discriminating against Native bush people by requesting major credit cards and a forty-hour work week as criteria to pay fares by check. I hope you will look into this matter. Also, I would like to urge you to post a sign at the ticket window stating your payment by check policy. It is the least you could do to help us avoid a wait in a long line only to get turned away in front of all the people.

Sincerely,

Walter R. Carlo
cc: Human Rights Commission,
Anchorage
Editor, Tundra Times,
Fairbanks