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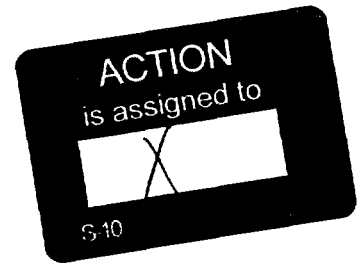
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January 13, 2004

The Honorable Norman Y. Mineta
Secretary, Department of Transportation
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION
DOCKETS

2004 JAN -2 P 3:06



RE: Continuation of Alaska Airlines EAS Service in Southeast Alaska

Dear Secretary Mineta,

Let this letter serve as my expression of strong support for Alaska Airlines to be allowed to continue to provide essential air service to communities in Southeast Alaska. As a long time commercial banker in Juneau, I have observed how Alaska Airlines has provided us with excellent service for many years and how important this service is for continued access to the capital city as well as for the economic welfare of our region.

The use of jet aircraft as opposed to slower, noisier, and less comfortable propeller driven aircraft is an extremely important benefit offered by Alaska Airlines – a benefit that would likely not be offered by a substitute carrier.

More importantly, the route connections offered by Alaska provide a cheaper and more efficient way for passengers to travel both in and out of SE Alaska. Flying one airline from coast to coast to and from Alaska is now possible and makes travel for Alaskans so much easier.

As the current Chair of the Alaska Committee, a group of concerned citizens working to make Juneau a better capital city, I can tell you that consistent safe air transportation is an extremely important component in how the rest of the State evaluates ease of access to Juneau.

Given the weather, geography, and lack of any road system connecting most of our communities with the rest of the state, our communities are particularly isolated and, therefore extremely dependent on reliable air access. Alaska Airlines pioneered the use of GPS flight navigation equipment on their jet aircraft that has greatly improved the safety and dependability of air travel.

I respectfully urge DOT to select Alaska Airlines for continued essential air service throughout Southeast Alaska.

Sincerely,

Win Gruening
3192 Pioneer Ave
Juneau, AK 99801

Cc: Senator Ted Stevens – 522 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510
Cc: Senator Lisa Murkowski – 322 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510
Cc: Congressman Don Young – 2331 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515