

Dear Alaskan,

As Alaskans, we know that aviation safety is more than just a policy issue in our state. It's a matter of daily life. Our highways are our skies, where we get food and fuel, connect with family and friends, and in many cases, flying is the only way many Alaskans can access emergency medical care.

For years, however, Alaska aviation has faced serious challenges. A February 2020 NTSB report found that over a ten-year period, Alaska's total aviation accident rate was 2.35 times higher than the national average, with a fatal accident rate 1.34 times higher. Those numbers reflect the reality Alaskan pilots and operators navigate every day: rapidly changing weather, vast distances, limited infrastructure, and conditions that leave little margin for error.

One of the clearest findings from that report was the critical importance of reliable, real-time weather data. Yet too many communities still lack dependable information due to gaps in infrastructure, telecommunications failures, and inconsistent maintenance of existing systems.

In response, and working closely with FAA leadership, I pushed for a fundamentally different approach: one that recognizes Alaska cannot be treated like the Lower 48. That effort led to the creation of the Alaska Aviation Safety Initiative, designed to move beyond piecemeal fixes and instead address safety comprehensively: weather systems, infrastructure, telecommunications, maintenance, and regulatory flexibility.

Last year, I worked to codify this initiative into law through the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024. That law:

- Established the Alaska Aviation Safety Initiative as a permanent requirement
- Set a goal of reducing fatal aviation accidents in Alaska by 90 percent by 2033
- Required improved maintenance and reliability of weather equipment
- Provided long-needed flexibility for Alaska-specific aviation operations
- Authorized \$25 million annually through 2028 to carry out this work

On April 9, 2025, the FAA announced the first \$25 million investment under that authority. We built on that momentum through the Working Families Tax Cuts Act, which secured an additional \$120 million for Alaska aviation safety, including:

- \$80 million for weather infrastructure
- At least 50 Automated Weather Observing Systems
- 60 Visual Weather Observing Systems
- 64 new weather camera sites statewide
- An additional \$40 million dedicated specifically to the Alaska Aviation Safety Initiative

This funding directly supports the FAA's plan to deploy 174 new weather observation stations across Alaska—one of the most significant aviation safety investments in our state's history. This historic funding is a good first step. My team and I will continue working closely with Alaska's aviation community to ensure these provisions are fully implemented and that these investments deliver real, measurable improvements in safety.

For decades, Alaska aviators and the Alaska congressional delegation have worked together to pioneer safety solutions that later became national models. That partnership remains essential. Aviation is the backbone of our state—supporting our economy, our health care system, and our ability to remain connected across our vast landscape. I remain committed to ensuring we have the investment, infrastructure, and flexibility needed to keep our skies safe.

If you would like more information about how specific provisions might impact you, please reach out to my office at 202-224-3004 or visit www.sullivan.senate.gov. We are happy to help.

Sincerely,



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator

