



ALASKA AIRMEN
ASSOCIATION

February 21, 2018

Mr. Steven Villanueva
Director, Flight Service
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20591

RE: Alaska Flight Service Modernization Initiative

Dear Mr. Villanueva,

We are writing today to express our support for the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Alaska Flight Service modernization initiative. In just the last few years, new technologies and innovations have dramatically changed the way General Aviation pilot's access and interact with aeronautical and meteorological information. Flight Service is a fundamental resource pilot's use to access flight critical information, yet, it has not been comprehensively modernized in decades. We encourage the FAA to move forward on a modernization effort that will streamline service delivery and meet pilot's needs.

As you know, Alaska relies on aviation more than any other state in the union. In many cases, aviation is the only method communities are accessible. In 2017, the FAA published a story in the *FAA Daily Broadcast* stating 82% of Alaska's communities are not accessible by road and may rely on aviation for survival. The average number of enplanements per capita for off-road communities in Alaska is between eight and thirty times higher than in comparable communities in western rural states. Alaska Flight Service plays an important part in supporting aviation and facilitating travel in the state.

A 2017 survey of Alaskan General Aviation pilots indicated Flight Service was a primary resource for weather information. Pilots indicated they value this safety resource as they can "ask questions" and "get a second opinion." Other surveys revealed opportunities for modernization of Flight Service. One from 2016 indicated over 80% of Alaskan pilots use an Electronic Flight Bag routinely in the cockpit. We think it is important Alaska Flight Service embrace and leverage this and other technology to improve service delivery.

Alaska Flight Service is a leader among aviation service providers, and is heavily relied upon by Alaskan pilots. This is a key moment in time where the service may need to change in fundamental ways to stay relevant and meet the needs of its customers. We encourage the FAA to work with relevant stakeholders to determine what services are valued by pilots, what new services are needed, and how service delivery can be improved. It is important the FAA consider the end user during this initiative, and we look forward to providing feedback and data throughout the process so the FAA can make informed and constructive decisions.

Sincerely,

Rune Duke
Senior Director, Government Affairs
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association

Adam White
Manager, Government Affairs
Alaska Airmen's Association