


JUNEAU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT MEMORANDUM

TO: CBJ Assembly Members

FROM:  Allan Heese, Airport Manager

DATE: September 10, 2004

RE: Airport EIS Update

Currently the Runway Safety Area (RSA) at Juneau International Airport (JNU) is deficient in both length and width and is one of several projects included in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and their consultant (SWCA) have presented several options to the Airport; however, it is very unlikely the Airport's preferred RSA alternative will be chosen because the Airport contains insufficient land to incorporate the footprint. (The FAA has stated this in various meetings I have had with them.)

At Monday evening's meeting of the Committee of the Whole, I will be making a power point presentation to explain the RSA alternatives that have been presented to the Airport by FAA/SWCA. It will explain why EMAS (Engineered Material Arresting System), the favored alternative of the FAA, is unsuitable for Juneau. Finally, it will explain the need for the land transfer prior to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Several people have written letters in opposition to the requested transfer. Key questions that have been raised and the responses to them are:

- *What is the status of the wetlands access around the runway if this transfer is made?*
Except for the period when construction is being done, the wetlands access would not be eliminated through this request. It would, however, potentially be relocated to a position closer to the Mendenhall River.

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- *Why is it important to make this request now, rather than waiting for the EIS to be closer to completion?* Due to the FAA's interpretation of federal statutes and treatment of various alternatives, the Airport's preferred alternative would not be chosen because of the requirement to avoid the Refuge. Once an alternative other than our preferred is chosen, either in the DEIS or when the EIS is completed and a Record of Decision (ROD) is issued, it will be extremely difficult to go back and make a request for land to support an alternative which has been eliminated.
- *What happens to the transferred Refuge land if an alternative that doesn't require use of Refuge land is ultimately chosen?* Resolution 2271 includes a clause which states the CBJ requirement to return the land to the State if the land is not needed for airport projects. Conversations with Department of Natural Resources personnel have indicated their transfer language would likely contain language requiring reversion of the land to the State should the projects not use Refuge land.

Peggy Boggs of the CBJ Legal Office has analyzed the legal aspects of the transfer request and prepared a memo addressing the Resolution. It is also included as a part of your packet.