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Alan G. Kelly
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TONY KNOWLES
GOVERNOR



P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001
(907) 465-3800
Fax (907) 465-3832

STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

OFFICE OF GOVERNOR
DIVISION OF
GOVERNMENTAL COORD.
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November 4, 1997

The Honorable Vic Kohring
Alaska State Legislature
600 East Railroad Avenue
Wasilla, AK 99654

Dear Representative Kohring:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposed closure of the airstrip at the entrance to Denali National Park by the National Park Service (NPS).

Adequate air access in the Denali entrance area is important, not only to provide for the travel needs of Alaskans and visitors, but also as a margin of safety for pilots in bad weather. Many Alaskans voiced these concerns in response to NPS Regional Director Robert Barbee's February announcement to close the airstrip.

My staff at the Department of Governmental Coordination contacted the NPS on this matter and was told the NPS has decided to keep the airstrip open for general aviation use for at least two more years while they work to ensure acceptable alternatives exist. Their decision was made in response to access and safety concerns. My Administration will continue to oppose closure of this airstrip until such alternatives are provided.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. If I can be of additional assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Tony Knowles
Governor

- cc: The Honorable Ted Stevens
- The Honorable Frank Murkowski
- The Honorable Don Young
- Deborah Williams
- Special Assistant to the Secretary for Alaska, USDO
- Robert Barbee, NPS Regional Director
- Diane Mayer, DGC

TK:JV:MH: DGC:jd

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