

SEC. 1219. Contract Weather Observers

Purpose: To require a study on safety risks of the potential discontinuation of the Contract Weather Observer Program at certain airports.

An Amendment proposed by Ms. Cantwell (for herself, and for Mr. Moran and Mr. Schatz) to Amendment No. \_\_\_\_\_, the Thune-Nelson Substitute to S.2658, The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2016.

Amendment No. \_\_\_\_\_ the Thune-Nelson Substitute to S.2658, The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2016 is amended:

By striking Section 1219, and inserting:

(a) In General.—Not later than 1 year after the date of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committee of Congress a report—

(1) which includes public and stakeholder input, and examines all safety risks, hazard effects, efficiency and operational effects on airports, airlines, and other stakeholders that could result from loss of Contract Weather Observer service at the 57 airports targeted for the loss of this service.

(2) detailing how the FAA will accurately report rapidly changing severe weather conditions at these airports including thunderstorms, lightning, fog, visibility, smoke, dust, haze, cloud layers and ceilings, ice pellets, and freezing rain/drizzle without contract weather observers.

(3) Indicating how airports can comply with applicable FAA orders governing weather observations given the current documented limitations of Automated Surface Observing Systems.

(b) Moratorium— The Administrator may not finalize any determination regarding the continued use of the contract weather observer service at any airport until after the date the report is submitted under subsection (a).

(c) REPORT ON GOLDEN TRIANGLE INITIATIVE OF NOAA.

(1) REPORT REQUIRED. – Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the Golden Triangle Initiative of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(2) ELEMENTS. – The report shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the impacts of enhanced aviation forecast services provided as part of the Golden Triangle Initiative on weather-related air traffic delays.

(B) A description of the costs of providing such enhanced aviation forecast services.

(C) A description of potential alternative mechanisms to provide enhanced aviation forecast services comparable to such enhanced aviation forecast services for airports in rural or low population density areas.