

# Alaska State Legislature

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## Senator Drue Pearce District F

**For Immediate Release:** May 8, 2001  
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## **Bills Would Create Airport Authority**

(JUNEAU) – Sen. Drue Pearce (R-Anchorage) and Rep. Jeannette James (R- North Pole) introduced companion bills today in the Senate and House of Representatives to create an Alaska Airport Authority. The Authority will include the Ted Stevens International Airport, the Fairbanks International Airport and the Cold Bay airport, which all serve as alternate landing sites for our international airport system.

Senate Bill 227 and House Bill 273 would create a Board of Directors with representation from each community that would hire an Airport Director and set policies, proposed budgets and procedures for the Authority. The Authority would assume all the existing bond debt of the three airports and would also be required to continue collective bargaining with the public employee unions that currently represent airport employees.

Pearce said she introduced this legislation because she has personally seen that most major international airports operate much more efficiently and in a more flexible, entrepreneurial manner than our state-run airports. “Our airports are critical air transportation links between the Orient, Europe, and North America and are major cargo hubs. If we continue to operate in a bureaucratic way, we stand to lose our cargo operations to the competition.”

“We want to maintain the public character of our airport operations while at the same time creating a management structure that will be more aggressive and responsive to the communities they operate in,” Pearce said.

“We intentionally introduced this bill at the end of this session to give us the whole period of the interim to work on this measure with local communities, businesses, organized labor and the State Department of Transportation,” said James.

“It is important that we look at these airports as an overall system,” said James “My goal is to stop competing against each other and to work together to compete against the rest of the world. This is critical for Alaska. Our economic outlook is bright and we need to be prepared for the opportunities of the future.”

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