

through Iraq unless specifically validated for such travel. The restriction was originally imposed because armed hostilities then were taking place in Iraq and Kuwait, and because there was an imminent danger to the safety of United States travelers to Iraq. American citizens then residing in Iraq and American professional reporters and journalists on assignment there were exempted from the restriction on the ground that such exemptions were in the national interest. The restriction has been extended for additional one-year periods since then, and was last extended on March 20, 1998.

Conditions in Iraq remain unsettled and hazardous, and tensions remain high. Iraq continues to refuse to comply with UN Security Council resolutions to fully declare and destroy its weapons of mass destruction and missiles while mounting a virulent public campaign in which the United States is blamed for maintenance of U.N. sanctions. Between December 14–18, 1998, this refusal resulted in extensive coalition air strikes against Iraqi military targets. Since December 1998, the Iraqi Airforce has violated the northern and southern no-fly zones on more than 100 occasions, and coalition aircraft have been fired upon in more than 60 incidents.

Local conflicts within Iraq also pose hazards to travellers. Military repression of Shia communities continues in southern Iraq with reports that hundreds of persons were summarily killed in security sweeps during 1998. In the north, tens of thousands of Iraqi soldiers remain poised for possible military operations against Kurd, Turkomen, and Assyria Iraqis.

Iraq's economy was severely damaged during the Gulf War and continues to be affected by the government of Iraq's refusal to implement fully the UN's Oil for Food program. Basic modern medical care and medicines may not be available to our citizens in case of emergency.

U.S. citizens and other foreigners working inside Kuwait near the Iraqi borders have been detained by Iraqi authorities in the past and sentenced to lengthy jail terms for alleged illegal entry into the country. Although our interests are represented by the Embassy of Poland in Baghdad, its ability to obtain consular access to detained U.S. citizens and to perform emergency services is constrained by Iraqi unwillingness to cooperate. In light of these circumstances, I have determined that Iraq continues to be a country "where there is imminent danger to the public health or physical safety of United States travellers".

Accordingly, United States passports shall continue to be invalid for use in travel to, in, or through Iraq unless specifically validated for such travel under the authority of the Secretary of State. The restriction shall not apply to American citizens residing in Iraq on February 1, 1991, who continue to reside there, or to American professional reporters or journalists on assignment there.

The Public Notice shall be effective upon publication in the **Federal Register** and shall expire March 20, 2000, unless sooner extended or revoked by Public Notice.

Dated: March 18, 1999.

Madeleine K. Albright,

Secretary of State.

[FR Doc. 99-7324 Filed 3-22-99; 2:36 pm]

BILLING CODE 4710-06-U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Office of the Secretary

Application of Wrangell Mountain Air, Inc.; For Certificate Authority

AGENCY: Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Notice of Order to Show Cause (Order 99-3-13); Docket OST-1999-5010.

SUMMARY: The Department of Transportation is directing all interested persons to show cause why it should not issue an order finding Wrangell Mountain Air, Inc., fit, willing, and able, and awarding it a certificate of public convenience and necessity to engage in interstate scheduled air transportation of persons, property, and mail.

DATES: Persons wishing to file objections should do so no later than April 2, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Objections and answers to objections should be filed in Docket OST-1999-5010 and addressed to Department of Transportation Dockets, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Rm. PL-401, Washington, DC 20590, and should be served upon the parties listed in Attachment A to the order.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Carol Woods, Air Carrier Fitness Division (X-56, Room 6401), U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590, (202) 366-2340.

Dated: March 18, 1999.

Charles A. Hunnicutt,

Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs.

[FR Doc. 99-7173 Filed 3-23-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-62-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Major Investment Study and Environmental Impact Statement: Stark, Columbiana, and Carroll Counties, Ohio

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that a major investment study and environmental impact statement will be prepared concurrently for transportation improvements proposed in Stark, Columbiana, and Carroll Counties, Ohio.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael B. Armstrong, Field Operations Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, 200 N. High Street, Room 328, Columbus, Ohio 43215, Telephone: (614) 280-6855.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), will concurrently prepare a major investment study (MIS) and an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal that will consider transportation improvements to the U.S. 30 corridor from Trump Road in Stark County to State Route 11 in Columbiana County, Ohio.

A transportation investment is considered necessary to improve the regional transportation network by providing an improved east-west travel corridor; to reduce anticipated congestion on existing U.S. Route 30 from projected traffic volumes; to improve safety on the existing highway system by removing trips from the network; and to support existing industry and future development through improved access to the region.

Actions under consideration include:

- (1) Taking no action;
- (2) upgrading and/or enhancing elements of the existing U.S. Route 30 transportation network;
- (3) constructing a roadway on new alignment in the U.S. Route 30 corridor.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. A series of public meetings will be held in the project area. On April 14, 1999, the Draft MIS will be presented to the public and, in early 2000, the preliminary draft EIS will be presented. In addition, a public hearing will be held in conjunction with