By Nina Keck

(Host) Congressman Peter Welch is concerned about the future of the Rutland Southern Vermont Regional Airport.

That's because a bill that passed the House on Friday contains a provision that would eliminate subsidies to rural airports.

Rutland gets almost $800,000 a year in "essential air service" funding to subsidize regular passenger service to Boston's Logan Airport.

But the House voted to eliminate the entire 200 million dollars that goes to essential air service around the country.

Welch says the program is vital to rural communities.

*(Welch) "Rutland doesn't have an interstate. It's really almost landlocked. This airport has been extremely important. It's also been very efficient. Rutland has had the greatest number of passenger enplanements in the EAS program since 1985."*

(Host) Welch says he's hopeful that Rutland will still be able to retain its funding.

The Senate has also approved a bill governing the Federal Aviation Administration. But the Senate retained essential air service funding - and increased it.

Welch says he'll work to make the Senate version is the one that ultimately emerges from Congress.