Bill Would Hurt Smith Reynolds, Some Say

County May Help Oversee Regional Airport

By Art Eisenstadt
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Staff Reporters

RALEIGH — Winston-Salem and Forsyth County would gain a foothold in overseeing the Regional Airport outside Greensboro under a bill filed yesterday by Sen. Ted Kaplan, D-Forsyth, for introduction in the General Assembly today.

But some portion of Winston-Salem's Smith Reynolds Airport are warning that such a bill could strike the final blow against airline service there.

Kaplan's bill would place two new members on the Greensboro-High Point Airport Authority who must be residents of the airport's Federal Aviation Administration assigned service area — more than 20 counties stretching from Burlington and Salisbury to Northwestern North Carolina and south-central Virginia.

After the bill is introduced today, Kaplan said, he will ask to have it amended to specify that the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners and the Winston-Salem Board of Aldermen each have the right to appoint one of the two new authority members.

The bill cannot take that form originally because of an April 15 deadline for introducing legislation affecting particular cities and counties.

The Airport Authority now has two members appointed by the Greensboro City Council, two appointed by the High Point City Council and one appointed by the Guilford County Board of Commissioners.

All four other senators who represent the two affected counties — Marvin Ward, D-Forsyth, Robert G. Shaw, R-Guilford, Wendell H. Sawyer, R-Guilford, and William N. Martin, D-Guilford — have agreed to co-sponsor the bill.

The Regional Airport authority has invited government and civic leaders from Forsyth and Guilford counties to discuss it during an 8 a.m. breakfast meeting Saturday at the Airport Marriott Hotel.

Kaplan said that leaders of the Greater Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce have told him that they back the bill.

But members of the Airport Commission of Forsyth County, the Forsyth County commissioners and Winston-Salem Mayor Wayne A. Corpening appear reluctant to support it, he said.

He said that some local officials are worried that the bill could cause further reductions in scheduled airline service at Smith Reynolds Airport.

That, in turn, would reduce Smith Reynolds' share of a federal airport improvement fund that is raised through a tax on airline tickets and allocated according to the number of passengers who board at each airport.

Sunbird Airlines is the only remaining commercial airline at Smith Reynolds. Piedmont Airlines discontinued its service there in October 1983.

Kenneth D. Cox, president of the Smith Reynolds Airport's Air Service Improvement Task Force, said he thinks the issue of Forsyth County representation at the

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Civics Say
City Airport,Bill May Hunt

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