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Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2009 4:30 PM
To: Angela Kolczynski -- King County Councilmember Julia Patterson; Beckett, Kurt; Sheckler, Bob - City of Des Moines; Marshall, Brenda; Brian Wilson - City of Federal Way; Brooke Lindquist -- City of Federal Way; Gallagher, Clare; Ward, Craig - City Manager (Sea Tac); Summerhays, Diane; Doug Schulze - Normandy Park; Leavitt, Elizabeth; Fain, Geraldine - Highline School District; Gordon Shaw; May, Jan - Highline School District; Janet Stallman; Mullet, Steve - City of Tukwila; Joan Hernandez - City of Tukwila; Creighton, John; Julie Burr Spani - Highline Public Schools; Sulman, Kym; Ellis, Lesa - City of SeaTac; Kochmar, Linda - City of Federal Way; Lisa Clausen; Hernandez, Marcela; Milanese, Marco; Reis, Mark; Kennedy, Mary Gin; Mary Linder -- City of Normandy Park; Mike Martin; Davis, Pat; Davis, Pat; Ralph Shape - City of Sea Tac; Berry, Rhoda - City Manager (Tukwila); Rose Clark; McEvoy, Shawn - City of Normandy Park; O'Keefe, Shelly - City of Tukwila; Bowman, Sue - City of Des Moines; Todd Cutts - City of SeaTac; Piasecki, Tony - City Manager (Des Moines); Wanda Skoog -- Highline Public Schools
Subject: Improved Airport Approach Procedures on the Horizon at Sea-Tac Airport

Dear Members of the Highline Forum:

The "Greener Skies" project, an effort led by Alaska Airlines in partnership with the Boeing Company, the FAA and the Port of Seattle to reduce the environmental impact of airport approaches, has been under development over the past year. The project has received some media coverage and so I wanted to provide you with some background on the effort and its timeline. If you still have questions after reading this email, please contact me. We'll also be covering the topic in more detail at our next Highline Forum in late September.

The "Greener Skies" project incorporates satellite-based flight guidance technology allowing aircraft to fly a consistent and controlled approach with pinpoint accuracy. Aircraft descend from cruise altitude to a runway along a less dispersed, more direct flight path at low power while remaining within existing noise abatement corridors. Known in the industry as Required Navigational Performance (RNP) and Optimized Profile Descent (OPD) procedures, the new procedures will allow aircraft to essentially glide from cruise altitude, thus requiring less fuel burn, emitting fewer greenhouse gases and causing less noise. RNP/ODP procedures can also often shorten the flight path, which means the total number of people presently experiencing over-flights should be reduced. Current Sea-Tac Airport approach procedures often involve a lengthy approach path with a series of stair-step descents as the aircraft is further out from the airport at higher altitudes. It should be noted that the greatest benefit from these "Greener Skies" procedures will be experienced over areas further away from the immediate airport vicinity.

Limited, nighttime flight testing began on June 16. The FAA requires a lengthy validation process before the procedures can be implemented. If all goes well, the partners hope to have approval sometime in 2010 with implementation in 2011 for all Sea-Tac carriers equipped with the onboard technology. RNP/ODP procedures are part of the FAA's overall plan, known as the Next Generation Air Transportation System, to modernize the nation's airspace system through 2025.

Knowing the beneficial environmental and community impacts connected to the "Greener Skies" project, the team continues to work closely with the FAA to identify next steps towards full implementation. If you have any further questions, feel free to contact me or Stan Shepherd, Noise Programs Manager, at 206-787-4095.

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