



City of Des Moines

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January 5, 2010

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CITY OF BURIEN

Mr. Mark Reis, Managing Director
Aviation Division
Port of Seattle
PO Box 68727
Seattle, WA 98168-0727

Dear Mr. Reis:

The City of Des Moines welcomes the news that the Port of Seattle, operator of Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, plans to start a noise-mitigation study as provided in 14 C.F.R. Part 150. As a city close to Sea-Tac Airport, we are greatly impacted by operations at this facility. We participated in the last Part 150 study at Sea-Tac, seeking a diminution of community impact, reduction of noise, and mitigation of noise. We would like to participate in the pending study, but at this time, with the study planned as it is, we cannot support it.

Such studies afford communities like ours opportunities to work on a cooperative basis, as equal partners, with the airport operator, airport customers (airlines), and other affected communities to propose programs to mitigate and reduce noise impacts. We believe that we are as well equipped as anyone, and better equipped than most, to say how Sea-Tac affects our community and what remedies would be effective and should be explored. Unfortunately, the design of the study to date does not recognize our city and our neighboring cities as having a significant role.

In the first place, we should have been invited to work with Port staff to design the study. To date, no one from our senior staff or our elected Council has been included in the design of the study, the preparation of the scope of work, the process for selecting consultants, or in a public-participation study for the general public. This failure applies, we believe, to all the cities that should be involved.

Secondly, once underway, the study relegates the cities to a minor and inappropriate role. We understand that each city will be invited to send a staff planner to a technical committee, but what will be needed, if the City is to be represented, is someone with policy-making authority, serving on a policy-making governance committee. The workshop process that we understand to be the majority of the public input part of the study, while giving the general public an opportunity to provide input above and beyond what occurred during the previous study, is not a substitute in our minds for a policy-making governance/advisory committee. What is lacking is

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a committee that can synthesize the input provided at the workshops, along with the other information that is developed during the study, to create a better informed, community-based set of recommendations. We believe that an advisory committee, similar in make up to the committee formed for the previous study, should be included in the upcoming study.


In short, we think that the Port of Seattle is not proceeding in accordance with applicable regulations. We should have been invited into the process at the very start, as is clear from any fair reading of 14 .C.F.R. sec. 150.23 (d), which appears below:

Prior to (emphasis added) and during the development of a program, and prior to submission of the resulting draft program to the FAA, the airport operator shall afford adequate opportunity for the active and direct participation of the States, public agencies and planning agencies in the areas surrounding the airport, aeronautical users of the airport, the airport operator, and the general public to submit their views, data, and comments on the formulation and adequacy of that program. Prior to submitting the program to the FAA, the airport operator shall also provide notice and the opportunity for a public hearing.

We believe the study, as presently designed, has failed to meet the requirements of 14 CFR sec. 150.23 (d). We strongly encourage the Port to start over, bringing in the local cities and the interested general public even before any aspect of the study is set down on paper.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We greatly appreciate your efforts to make the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport a good neighbor to all the surrounding communities. We look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,


Robert F. Sheckler
Mayor

c: Des Moines City Council
Port of Seattle Commission
Tay Yoshitani, Chief Executive Officer, Port of Seattle
Diane Summerhays, Director of Community Development, Port of Seattle
Hon. J. Randolph Babbitt, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration
Catherine Lang, Acting Associate Administrator for Airports, FAA
Donna Taylor, Airports Division Manager, NW Mountain Regional Office, FAA
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Federal Way City Council
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SeaTac City Council
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