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25 February 2000

Hon. Slade Gorton
U.S. Senator
10900 NE 4th, Suite 2110
Bellevue, WA 98004-5841

Hon. Patty Murray
U.S. Senator
2988 Jackson Federal Bldg.
912 Second Ave.
Seattle, WA 98174- 1001

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C.A.S.E. (Citizens
Against Sea-Tac
Expansion)

Seattle Community
Council Federation

Seattle Council on
Airport Affairs

Dear Senators Murray and Gorton:

On February 3rd and 4th, Seattle television station KIRO aired an exposé titled "Exposed Hidden Dangers at Sea-Tac Airport". Their investigation of the NASA AMES files documented hundreds of near misses, close incursions, and mechanical problems in the very crowded airspace near Sea-Tac airport. The fact that these incidents are not reported (by the pilots, the airlines, or the aircraft controllers) to the FAA and then to the decision making local public officials is very serious. The FAA is the public lead agency responsible for protecting public safety in aviation matters.

The KIRO report uncovered very disturbing information that may be only the tip of the iceberg. The investigation indicated that there could be other agencies keeping information about safety issues at Sea-Tac Airport.

The combined airspace of the Sea-Tac, Boeing Field, Renton, and Auburn airports now produces more than one million (1,000,000) aircraft operations a year. It should be a cause for concern that in addition to this very large number of current operations the Port of Seattle's Master Plan includes a major expansion with a 3rd runway to increase the number of operations. Would the FAA and our local officials support this expansion had they been aware of the dangers to public safety that the KIRO documentary has revealed?

We are requesting that you initiate an investigation of the public safety issues that this very limited exposé has uncovered. We suggest that the investigation should also cover any additional safety issues that come to light as it progresses. From what we know, the Inspector General of the FAA would be an appropriate official to carry out the investigation; if not the Inspector General, then we would ask that

RCAA

U.S. Senators Gorton & Murray
Sea-Tac safety issues
24 February 2000
Page 2

you task some other official or agency of equal independence and authority to do the work.

We also request that a moratorium be placed on the issuance of any permits for the filling of wetlands or any other construction related to Sea-Tac Airport expansion until the investigation is concluded. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently reconsidering a permit under the provisions of sec. 404 of the federal Clean Water Act, & perhaps they should be asked to put their proceeding on hold till the safety issues are dealt with. The FAA itself should be instructed to suspend its approval of the Sea-Tac Master Plan, again, till the safety issues are dealt with.

A tape of the KIRO-TV exposé is enclosed (with the original letter to your local office) to assist you in your consideration of this request. We also will be available to provide additional information and/or assistance that will help you. We request that you find this to be a high public priority and respond in a timely fashion. Your assistance is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lawrence J. Corvari
President
Regional Commission on Airport Affairs

encl: Videotape, w. clip list

cc: Hon. Slade Gorton
U.S. Senator
111 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510-0001

Hon. Patty Murray
U.S. Senator
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510-0001

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U.S. Senators Gorton & Murray
Sea-Tac safety issues
24 February 2000
Page 3

Additional cc's:

U.S. Rep. Adam Smith
U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott