

TESTIMONY of

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Before the Seattle Port Commission
Seattle, WA
October 25, 2016 – 2:00 PM¹

Agenda Item 6.c. Flight Corridor Safety Program Phase 1

This project represents yet another \$3,231,000 for Sea-Tac at a location not viable into the future.

The Third Runway, which opened in 2008, resulted in a Washington State Auditor's office report that the Port wasted nearly \$100 million in construction contracts. An internal investigation found numerous instances where Port employees broke state law or Port policy, and identified 10 instances of civil fraud.²

The Port's Third Runway EIS also failed to disclose significant changes to inbound and outbound commercial airplane patterns and noise impacts.³ Because of Sea-Tac's N/S orientation, north Seattle and Shoreline residents are adversely impacted at a much greater frequency by landing patterns into Sea-Tac. Many inbound flights track north along Puget Sound, past Sea-Tac, with low turns back south (often under 3,000 feet), along with past mid-night outbound overflights that combine for noise impacts up to 21 hours a day.⁴ As a resident 16 miles north of Sea-Tac, in 2012, I successfully appealed our property tax assessment resulting in a property tax reduction due to Sea-Tac overflight air traffic noise. This reduction in property values throughout Seattle due to Sea-Tac is an unacknowledged cost of the Third Runway.⁵

Sea-Tac cannot support projected increases in passengers. In 2015, Sea-Tac served 42 million passengers. The Port's Master Plan projects 66 million by 2034.⁶ So what to do? Negotiate with the Washington Congressional delegation to move Joint Base Lewis-McCord to Moses

¹ It would be far more public "friendly" if the Port were to hold its Executive Sessions at 11:00 AM and begin the Port Commission meetings at noon. This would allow the public to attend at least part of the meetings during the public's lunch hour.

² See: <http://www.historylink.org/File/4211>

³ See attached *Seattle P-I* article, January 8, 2009.

⁴ While Sea-Tac does not control flight paths, the FAA has in the past diverted noise complaints to a phone sex line. See attached *MyNorthwest.com* article, September 28, 2011.

⁵ See attached statement of Will Coghlan.

⁶ See: <http://www.portseattle.org/Business/Construction-Projects/Airport-Projects/Pages/airport-master-plan.aspx>

Lake, one of the largest commercial airports west of the Mississippi, with an under-utilized 13,500-foot main runway, one of the longest in the nation, and far closer to the Yakima Training Center. Eastern Washington could use the “business.” Then move Sea-Tac to JBLM served by a rapid transit system from Seattle, Tacoma, and Olympia.

Agenda Item 7.c. Preliminary Tax Levy and the Draft Plan of Finance 2017-2021.

Over the next 20 years, the City of Seattle wants over \$100,000 of our property taxes for the privilege of living in Seattle. That is a formidable amount while living on retirement savings. And a not insignificant amount of that is the Port property tax levy, upon which King County taxpayers have never voted.

The Port’s Tax Levy PowerPoint is not the model of clarity.⁷ Page 25 depicts three areas of Tax Levy Funded Projects: Maritime - Fishing Industry Support; Maritime - Strategic Investments - Cruise Facilities; and Economic Development - Strategic Investments. As far as Fishing Industry Support, the Port loves to claim multiplier benefits from international trade. A February 2015, “Ties that Bind” report by the McDowell Group stated, “Including multiplier effects, nearly 24,000 Puget Sound jobs and \$1.3 billion in labor earnings are tied to Alaska’s seafood industry.”⁸ That would appear to be a base sufficient to fund Port fishing industry support, not King County property taxpayers.

As for Cruise Facilities, again, costs for cruise facilities support should be borne by the mega-cruise industry and passengers, not King County property taxpayers.

As for Economic Development, T91 is billed as providing short-term and long-term moorage for commercial workboats and fishing vessels, including factory trawlers, tugs, barges, ferries, breakbulk reefer vessels and roll-on/roll-off vessels. Again, upland development costs should be borne by the users, not King County property taxpayers.

In summary, this is a request for the Port to end its property tax levy.

⁷ Page 30 of the Port’s PowerPoint also includes RCW 53.25.030 definition of “marginal lands.” RCW 53.25.020(1) declares that “The existence of such marginal lands characterized by any or all of such conditions constitutes a serious and growing menace which is condemned as injurious and inimical to the public health, safety, and welfare of the people of the communities in which they exist and of the people of the state.” The definition of “marginal lands” includes “The existence of lots or other areas which are subject to being submerged by water.” *RCW 53.25.030(5)*. These are also known as wetlands, which are not a “menace to the public health, safety, and welfare of the people of this state.” The Port could generate some goodwill by requesting that the Legislature delete subsection (5) from RCW 53.25.030.

⁸ See: <http://www.seattlemaritime101.com/news-1/>

Port tries to reassure public about third runway

Use mischaracterized, Sea-Tac neighbors say
By KRISTEN MILLARES YOUNG, P-I REPORTER
Published 10:00 p.m., Thursday, January 8, 2009

The Port of Seattle told a group of angry Sea-Tac Airport neighbors at Thursday's Highline Forum meeting that the new third runway is being used as it was intended, despite elected officials' and citizens' protests to the contrary.

"We did the best we could to project what was going to be the noise associated with operation of runway," Port of Seattle Aviation Managing Director Mark Reis said.

He later added that the Federal Aviation Administration, whose air traffic controllers are in charge of the third runway's daily use, is "seeking ways not to use the third runway during night hours" from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Des Moines Mayor Bob Sheckler is co-chairman of the Highline Forum and the former chairman of the Airport Communities Coalition, a group of cities that spent more than \$15 million suing the port in an unsuccessful effort to block the third runway's construction.

The port's argument for building the third runway has always rested on its assertion that about 44 percent of the year, poor visibility and bad weather conditions require air traffic controllers to land planes on only one runway, rather than two, causing delays. Now, they can land planes on two runways during poor weather -- and can continually stage landings and departures on all three. Neighbors said the port has overstepped its past promises by using the third runway so much, while the port counters that wintry conditions contributed to the heightened usage -- which, in the end, it does not control, the port said.

In 1997, the port estimated for its supplemental environmental impact statement that by 2010, 27.7 percent of planes landing at Sea-Tac each year would do so on the third runway.

Now, the port's figures show that 44 percent of all planes arriving at Sea-Tac landed on the third runway from its opening day Nov. 20 through Dec. 17, which airport spokesman Perry Coquer wrote "reflects the low visibility conditions of November and December as you would expect."

"The premise seems to have changed from being used as a foul-weather type of facility," state Sen. Karen Keiser, D-Normandy Park, said. "It's been shifted, and I am very concerned about what that does to the process on the EIS" -- the environmental impact statement required to get the third runway permitted.

"Why go through it if you are going to change the operations after all the construction is done?" Keiser said.

Reis replied that "when the rationale for the runway was articulated from the economic perspective, we were able to articulate what the economic benefit was ... the EIS never said the runway was only going to be used in foul weather."

Des Moines Mayor Sheckler, who has acted as chairman of the Airport Communities Coalition, told the Seattle P-I the port had mischaracterized the third runway's use when advertising the project to the community and responding to neighbors' concerns.

During the meeting, he said that whenever anyone questioned the port about the third runway's use, foul weather was the answer.

"They really emphasized that one idea -- that it was only going to be used for that purpose," Sheckler said. "That is why so many people in the public are upset about it."

After the meeting, Port Commissioner Pat Davis said that the port had not deliberately misconstrued the third runway's purpose.

To mitigate the third runway so far, the port has bought 64 homes and insulated 114 more as part of an FAA program called the Part 150 process, which requires that airport operators study and mitigate the noise effects of airports.

The port is tracking the newly situated noise created by planes landing and taking off along the new runway's more westerly flight path in order to determine whether additional noise mitigation is warranted.

A formal Part 150 process will begin in November -- one month after the reopening of the airport's longest runway, which is being closed for reconstruction from April through October, leaving the third runway and the center runway to handle all of Sea-Tac's air traffic.

"The afternoon that they opened the third runway, the planes started, and it's been nonstop," Sea-Tac neighbor Ted Turner said.

"My wife came home and cried for two weeks -- this is hugely affecting my personal life, my family; it has damaged me seriously."

Turner said his home's value has plummeted; he said he tried to move when the third runway was proposed but couldn't find anything comparable.

"Our neighborhood flat lined while everything around us skyrocketed," Turner said. "I can't find anything now, though I sure would like to move."

Bothell resident Mike Hughes owns a Burien rental home whose tenants called to ask for a \$300 monthly rent reduction because of the noise, threatening to move out if they didn't receive it.

"The chance of me re-renting a house with airplanes over it, especially at this time of year, is slim to none," Hughes said, later adding he was hoping to join his neighboring property owners in redeveloping their parcels as light industrial, as permitted by new city zoning.

"The quality of life ... the fuel, the noise, the exhaust ... I could sell the house as a residence, but I am sure it would be rather difficult."

The port's Reis said during the meeting than an anomaly in the port's flight tracking numbers since then prevented the port from releasing more current data, which he said was in conflict with the FAA's own figures.

Read more: <http://www.seattlepi.com/local/article/Port-tries-to-reassure-public-about-third-runway-1297055.php#ixzz1ys0tMSz7>

August 1, 2012

Statement of Will Coghlan:

My name is Will Coghlan. I live at 7038 Jones Ave N.W., in north Ballard with my wife Elspeth and our 10-month-old son. We moved to Seattle from New York in 2010. We rented an apartment on Capitol Hill from August 2010 to December 2010. At that time we noted noise and airplane flights over Capitol Hill from planes landing at Sea-Tac.

We moved to north Ballard and bought our house on November 29, 2010. During the process of purchasing our house, we were not informed that the Federal Aviation Administration had re-routed north bound commercial airplanes at low altitudes over north Ballard in order to make the turn back south to land at the Port of Seattle's newly constructed third runway.

The re-routing of commercial airplanes at low altitudes over north Ballard has had a detrimental impact on our neighborhood. Despite the fact that we have some double paned windows throughout the house, the frequent low over flights, especially after midnight and early in the morning, creates a noise nuisance, especially for our young son.

Had we known of this noise problem at the time of purchase we likely would have offered a lower price or looked elsewhere.

Sincerely,



Will Coghlan
7038 Jones Ave NW
917-208-4306

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Updated Sep 28, 2011 - 11:48 am

FAA directs complaints to phone sex line

In what was apparently a very unfortunate mistake, the Seattle Air Traffic Control Tower was unknowingly sending those with complaints about air traffic noise to a phone sex line.

David Ortman lives in Seattle's Ballard neighborhood and told 97.3 KIRO FM he reached out to the Federal Aviation Administration to complain about loud, low-flying commercial planes over his home.

"Plane after plane after plane," Ortman said of the all-day and all-night air traffic. "When you think the last one has gone, another one comes over."

He called the Seattle Air Traffic Control Tower, but reached a voicemail prompting him to dial an 800 number to leave a noise complaint after hours. He dialed the number, but what he heard had nothing to do with airplanes.

"Exciting local people want to talk to you now!" shouts a perky, female recording on the other end of the dial, who prompts the caller to dial yet another 800 number.

Ortman dialed the next number, and was met with low, sultry music and the sound of a woman's voice.

"Hey there sexy guy," the recording says. "Welcome to an exciting new way to go live one-on-one with hot (expletive) girls."

Ortman said he was "shocked" by the recording, which offered up "hundreds of hot girls" for "99 cents per minute," and thought he had dialed the first 800 number by mistake.

"I thought, oh well, I either misheard it, had taken the number down wrong," he said. "So I called it again."

There was no mistake.

When asked about the traffic tower's recording, an FAA official said they were not aware the number was wrong. According to the official, it appeared a secretary had simply misspoken, and replaced the last number of the complaint hotline with a 2 instead of a 7.

The traffic control tower could not say how long the incorrect recording had been in use, but as of Tuesday afternoon it had been changed.

The Port of Seattle runs the real 800 number, and says it has not changed in around 10 years. The correct number for air traffic noise complaints is 1-800-826-1147 or 206-787-5393 to call locally.