

March 5, 2013

Ms. Maxine Waters
Congresswoman, California 35th Congressional District
10124 South Broadway, Suite 1
Los Angeles, California 90003

Subject: Congressional oversight assistance with LAX proposed expansion plan

Dear Congresswoman Waters,

Thank you for the continued support of your constituents, particularly when it involves issues at LAX and the need for regional ground and air transportation solutions in Southern California.

The Neighborhood Council of Westchester Playa (NCWP) is formally requesting your immediate assistance with several areas of concern that we fundamentally have with LAWA's recent Specific Plan Amendment Study Staff Preferred Alternatives. Our local City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Council is located in LA City Council District 11. The area we serve is a fully committed representation of your constituency that is adjacent to LAX operations. We implore you and your staff to all the resources available up to and including the United States House Financial Services Committee, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, the House Infrastructure and Transportation Committee, the Department of Transportation, National Transportation Safety Board; and the Department of Homeland Security to expeditiously investigate the following concerns:

1. The difference in overall project cost between Alternative #1 and Alternative #2. We strongly believe that LAWA's recommendation of achieving safety and efficiency through the adoption of Alternative #1 can be achieved with Alternative #2, at a substantially lower cost.
2. Full staffing of the of the aircraft control tower. Air Traffic Controllers are currently working at approximately 30% below recommended staffing. It is well known that human error is one of the leading causes of incursions at LAX. A Control Tower that is fully staffed with senior experienced Air Traffic Controllers will have an immediate and positive impact on airfield safety.
3. To identify and prioritize other cost effective technical methods for improving environmental and airport safety. LAX has an imbalanced ratio of airfield acreage to million annual passengers (MAP); this airport should be a prime test bed for advanced technologies that will protect the environment and enhance safety.
4. The fiscal risk associated with such a significant capital investment proposal to move the runway, especially when the stated justification for such a dramatic move has not been supported by fact in any of the documentation submitted.

We believe that LAWA should re-prioritize and lower any financial exposure by doing "first things first." Modernization efforts similar to those currently underway at TBIT, are long overdue. Funding these types of projects will provide a meaningful and substantiated rate of return, especially when compared to LAWA's recommendation of Alternative #1.

5. The economic impact and risk to the United States economy should LAX be shut down for an extended period due to natural or man-made disasters such as earthquakes, work stoppage or terrorist attack.
6. The need for a wider regional transportation infrastructure plan. A comprehensive plan that would optimize the existing LAX design and footprint, and that also provides transportation services to the more immediate growth areas in the Southern California region. We believe that this broader approach should mirror those concepts found in such metropolitan areas as New York, Washington D.C., Chicago, and the San Francisco Bay area.

We are formally reaching out to you with the understanding that there is an established decision-making process for projects of this magnitude. The Los Angeles World Airport staff, the Board of Airport Commissioners, the Los Angeles City Council, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, and the Federal Aviation Administration are all participating in this complex endeavor.

However, we strongly believe that your leadership and personal focus will help to ensure that, overall, this project carries the appropriate long-term vision: A result that will ultimately modernize LAX and provide the Southern California region with a sustainable transportation future of which we can all be proud of.

Sincerely,

Cyndi Hench
President
Neighborhood Council Westchester Playa

Attachments:

"Don't Give Up on Regionalism!" A White Paper (Draft).

"LAWA FY 2012 bond-debt-fiscal risk analysis"