

US-Citizens Aviation Watch Association

a not-for-profit corporation

“Protecting the public’s health, environment, property and promoting safety.”

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U.S. Senate

Committee on Health and Education

Subcommittee on Public Health

Regarding Health Tracking: Improving Surveillance of Chronic Conditions and Potential Links to Environmental Exposures

Statement of Doctors Kenneth Hayes and Walter Bowman

for the Alliance of Residents Concerning O’Hare, and

US-Citizens Aviation Watch Association

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Dear President Bush and Members of the 107th Congress:

WE URGE YOU TO SUPPORT A MORATORIUM ON AIRPORT EXPANSION UNTIL THE FULL HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF AIRPORTS ARE KNOWN AND PROPERLY MITIGATED. INSTEAD, USE THE SOLUTIONS PROPOSED BY THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE¹.

¹ GAO. “National Airspace System: Long-Term Capacity Planning Needed Despite Recent Reduction in Flight Delays.” GAO-02-185. Dec. 2001. Three main measures as solutions: “The first involves adding new capacity—not by adding runways to existing capacity-constrained airports, but rather by building entirely new airports (Wayports) or using other nearby airports (Wayports) that have available capacity. The second involves ways to manage and distribute demand within the system’s existing capacity. Examples include limiting the number of takeoffs and landings during peak periods or limiting the ability of aircraft... The third involves developing other modes of intercity travel, such as, but not limited to, high-speed rail where metropolitan areas are relatively close together.”

Greater than 180 million people in the United States are affected by aviation-related air pollution, including hazardous and toxic emissions.^{2&3} In addition, millions of people are affected by other serious and deadly airport and aircraft emissions such as noise, ground and water pollution.⁴ Several recent studies have identified serious health problems for a large percentage of people living and working at considerable distances from airports, indeed, within radial distances as great as thirty-two miles⁵. Of great concern, the Environmental Protection Agency predicts that aviation-related pollution will double, or perhaps triple, within the next decade if left uncontrolled.

Far more information is needed to determine the full extent of these threats. Existing environmental and public health safeguards do not work, nor do we have a clear picture of how many people's lives are at risk from significant health threats due to aircraft engine exhaust air pollution, including cancer, asthma, brain tumors, emphysema, heart disease, leukemia, Hodgkin's disease, kidney damage and scores of other diseases.⁶

It may be said, with some certainty, that the aviation industry poses the most serious environmental and public health problem, which the U.S. population faces today. Airports and aircraft operations emit enormous quantities and sometimes-exotic types of pollution, which damage the entire atmosphere (from the earth's surface to the upper stratosphere), and pollute surface and underground fresh water supplies.⁷

The Federal Aviation Administration ("FAA") grossly underestimates the number of people (500,000) exposed to airport and aircraft noise. Among its protections for the aviation industry, the FAA uses the unscientific (65DNL) measurement to describe noise. This number severely undercounts the number of people whose health and quality of life is harmed by aviation noise pollution. Moreover, just using the air industry's unscientific, measurement (65DNL) demonstrates that well over 600,000 people are affected by the noise from one airport alone, Chicago's International O'Hare Airport⁸.

² City of Park Ridge, et. al. "Preliminary study and analysis of toxic air pollutant emissions from O'Hare International Airport and the resulting health risks created by these toxic emissions in surrounding residential communities." August 2000. The "O'Hare Airport Toxic Air Study" shows unacceptable cancer risks from O'Hare Airport air emissions which affect 98 communities in about a 32 mile radius of the airport, including Chicago proper. (Study does not include flight tracks).

³ Travel Agent Magazine: In the News. Aug. 9, 1999. p. 99. 70% of the population in the U.S. lives within 20 miles of a major airport.

⁴ See: www.us-cawa.org

⁵ City of Park Ridge, et al. Ibid. Chapter 1, p. 19.

⁶ See: www.areco.org, "Health", *Did you ever wonder what blows out of a jet airplane? Also, What symptoms can occur with prolonged exposure to these chemicals?*

⁷ GAO. *Aviation and the Environment: Aviation's Effects on the Global Atmosphere are Potentially Significant and Expected to Grow*. GAO/RCED-00-57. Feb. 2000.

⁸ 600,000 affected airport citizens only represents a limited amount of communities that monitor in the Chicagoland area. It is estimated that over 1.6 million people are located in the 65 DNL of Chicago's O'Hare Airport. The FAA claims that they

The aviation industry, similar to the tobacco industry, would like us to believe that what we don't know won't hurt us. They've been able to hide behind the slogans such as “economic benefit” and “federal preemption” and to bully municipalities into doing their bidding. Nationwide, there are probably over 2,000 organizations and municipalities fighting airport expansion and airport-related issues, illustrating the serious and growing problem of airport pollution.

Leaders of the aviation industry, such as James Goodwin of United Airlines Lines Corporation are shameless in seeking to restrict free speech by calling upon the federal government to break the “stranglehold” of local activists as he did in a speech at the Aero Club on October 17, 2001.⁹ The National Air Transportation Association (NATA), pleading for Congressional protection from citizens groups seeking to protect themselves from airport expansion, also seeks to limit public input and the rights of citizens as described in testimony before the House Aviation Subcommittee on October 5, 2000.¹⁰ The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association has bragged that it is sending an astonishing number of aviation-friendly legislators to Washington and that “[o]ne of the reasons AOPA-supported candidates did so well was that they received AOPA support: cold, hard, traveling money.¹¹”

The aviation industry’s various pollutants are largely unregulated, and its vast, adverse environmental and public health impacts, including harming children’s health, learning and development, affect a large percentage of this country’s population.

The United States needs a balanced transportation system which includes a world-class, high-speed passenger rail system, coupled with replacing jet planes in their current form with safer, more efficient, more environmentally-sustainable modes of transportation, in order to meet transportation demands without harming the public health or damaging the earth’s life-support systems.

We call upon you, our President and our elected representatives, to preserve our limited rights under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Clean Air Act in relation to airport and aircraft operations, and to enact fuller protection from and alleviation of the problems associated with airport and aviation operations. Finally, since few enforceable controls over aviation-related pollution exist, we request that you require the aviation industry and the FAA to make full and open disclosure of all adverse effects of all airport and aircraft emissions, so that

have substantially reduced the airport noise problem to “only 500,000 people” who are “significantly impacted,” mostly near the very largest airports in Chicago, New York, and New Jersey.

⁹ *United chief lays blame for delays*. Washington Post. Oct. 18, 2000. p. E12.

¹⁰ Larry Cox. Memphis Shelby County Airport Authority. Remarks to The House Aviation Subcommittee on Aviation: “Challenges Associated with Building New Runways.” Oct. 5, 2000

¹¹ “GA-Friendly Congress Heads To Washington: Aviation Supporters Score Big...” <http://avweb.com/n/?46a> *128 of 141 Congressional candidates AOPA supported won their contests.

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those living and working within up to thirty-two miles from an airport may know what risks airports and aircraft pose to their health and environment.

Thank you.

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