

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 18, 2002

The Honorable William O. Lipinski  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Aviation  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2251 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Lipinski:

We are writing to express our concerns about the scheduled Aviation Subcommittee markup of legislation to streamline the airport expansion approval process. We especially are concerned about the possibility that the Subcommittee might approve legislation that would provide mechanisms for the Federal government to override local airport planning decisions.

As members of the Southern California Regional Airport Congressional Working Group, we strongly oppose any legislation that would prevent the State of California and its regional and local governments from enacting a regional solution to future aviation needs, including limiting or prohibiting the proposed expansion of Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). LAX is the third largest airport in the United States, serving over 65 million air passengers per year. Nevertheless, the operator of LAX had proposed a massive expansion plan that could have increased the airports' capacity to as many as 120 million air passengers per year. A diverse coalition of over 80 cities and several grassroots organizations, known as the Coalition for a Truly Regional Airport Plan, organized to oppose LAX expansion and support a regional approach to Southern California's air transportation needs.

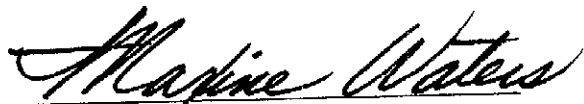
The proposed expansion of LAX would have had a severe impact upon the surrounding communities. According to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Report released by LAX expansion proponents, increased traffic in and out of LAX would have added 1,592 tons of pollutants per year to Los Angeles' air; an additional 7,150 persons would have been exposed to noise levels above 65 decibels; and inadequate noise mitigation efforts would have forced residents to remain indoors or move. Because of these negative impacts, many residents of the surrounding communities expressed strong opposition to LAX expansion.


Furthermore, the proposed expansion of LAX would have interfered with the development of a regional solution to Southern California's air transportation needs. While the communities surrounding LAX have been forced to endure a disproportionate share of the region's air traffic, other communities are eager for the economic benefits of development at their


local airports. The expansion of LAX would have made it extremely difficult for these communities to attract service to their local airports. Residents and businesses in these communities would have had no alternative other than to commute to an expanded LAX for their air transportation needs, resulting in an increase in traffic congestion on the streets surrounding LAX. Clearly, the proposed expansion of LAX would not have ended air transportation-related gridlock in the Southern California region.


Airport expansion should not be carried out over the objections of local communities. It would be both unfair and unwise for the Federal government to override the authority of state and local officials to plan local airport development. We respectfully request that you oppose the passage of legislation to allow the Federal government to override local airport planning decisions, particularly where there is progress in developing a solution to a region's future aviation needs.

Sincerely,

  
Maxine Waters

  
Dana Rohrabacher

  
Jane Harman

  
Jerry Lewis

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