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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**CHRISTINE KEHOE**  
THIRTY-NINTH SENATE DISTRICT



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  - LEGISLATIVE WOMEN'S CAUCUS

February 16, 2010

Charles Mellor, Chairman  
Peninsula Community Planning Board  
P.O. Box 6883  
San Diego, CA 92166

Dear Chairman Mellor and Members of the Planning Board:

Last summer the Peninsula Community Planning Board (PCPB) held a Town Hall Meeting on the future of San Diego International Airport, followed by a series of meetings with elected officials, discussions with the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority (Authority), and correspondence.

I write as a follow-up to your letter inviting me to meet with representatives from the Peninsula Community, to respond to a series of questions and issues raised during the meeting last fall.

### **Request for new legislation to separate SDIA operations and ALUC duties**

The 2001 legislation that created the Authority established the Authority's dual role as operator of San Diego International Airport and also as the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC). My Senate Bill 10 (SB 10) took effect on January 1, 2008, redefining the duties and responsibilities of the Authority, establishing a governance structure that brought more accountability and transparency to the Authority's operations and ensured more regional representation on the Board.

The PCPB has requested that I introduce new legislation assigning ALUC duties to another agency because of a perceived conflict of interest in the Authority's dual roles. I conducted hearings, met with Legislative Counsel, the Legislative Analyst, and various other state agencies as I formulated SB 10. No legal issues regarding a conflict of interest were raised about the Authority's dual role. The Unified Port District of San Diego expressed no interest then or now in taking back operations at Lindbergh Field, and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) did not express an interest then or now in resuming its former role as the Airport Land Use Commission.

**Linking ground and air aviation needs in RASP and AMAP will strengthen the RTP**  
SB 10 requires the Authority to complete a Regional Aviation Strategic Plan (RASP) that for the first time will assess the capacity and growth potential for both commercial and general

aviation at the county's twelve civilian airports plus Rodriguez Field. A forecast of air passenger and air cargo demand for the region will be included, plus air space needs for the four military airports.

The RASP will determine what new facilities are required for air and ground access for the region's airports, determine future funding needs and potential sources. Aviation plans for interregional airports will also be factored in to the analysis.

The RASP must be completed by June 30, 2011. SANDAG is required under SB 10 to complete an Airport Multimodal Accessibility Plan (AMAP) by January 1, 2013. The AMAP will determine which ground transportation projects are necessary to meet the aviation needs of the region's airports.

The RASP and AMAP will be incorporated into both the Regional Comprehensive Plan and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). A project must be in a region's adopted RTP in order to receive state or federal funds. Having in place a comprehensive plan that links ground and air transportation requirements should position the region well for future funding of critical infrastructure.

I will continue to work with the City of San Diego, SANDAG, the Metropolitan Transit System, North County Transit District, AMTRAK, CalTrans and the High Speed Rail Authority to improve ground transportation - including public transit - at Lindbergh Field. Discussions on the Consolidated Rental Car Facility, proposed parking structure and intermodal transit center should continue, and all should be subject to full environmental impact reports. Reducing congestion on North Harbor Drive and streets surrounding Lindbergh Field must be a priority.

#### **Does SB 10 require the Authority to pursue negotiations with the military on East Elliott?**

The PCPB raises the question of whether SB 10 requires the Authority to pursue negotiations with the military on the potential use of East Elliott as an international airport. SB 10 is silent on whether Lindbergh Field should or will remain as the region's international airport. That is a policy decision to be made by the Authority.

It was neither my intent in authoring SB 10, nor my intent today, to locate an international airport at MCAS Miramar or in East Elliott. MCAS Miramar plays a critical role in America's defense strategy. The recent assignment of MV-Osprey at the base along with hundreds of millions of dollars in new construction clearly demonstrates the base's importance to the country.

Day and nighttime specialized training by Marines in areas east of I-15 prior to assignments to Afghanistan or Iraq would be compromised by noise and lights from an airport in East Elliott. Training includes night drops from helicopters, a replica village with actors portraying civilians living in a war zone, and small arms training at all hours of the day and night. An international airport with the required transportation infrastructure would introduce lights and noise in an area that is now characterized by its dark sky, except for fleet carrier landing practice that the base controls.

The City of San Diego has been steadily acquiring property at East Elliott as mitigation land that places restrictions on its future use. The terrain in East Elliott is ill suited for a multi-runway airport. East Elliott is immediately adjacent to the Sycamore Landfill, and due to concerns about bird strikes, civilian airports are not located near municipal landfills. The Sycamore Landfill has the potential to serve our region for up to 100 years, and is not likely to close anytime soon.

### **Full Environmental Impact Reports should be required for ALUCPs**

In December 2009, I sent a letter to the Authority about the importance of conducting full environmental impact reports on the ALUCPs proposed for the urban airports. The Authority on January 25<sup>th</sup> adopted the ALUCPs based on Negative Declarations, but did modify the proposed ALUCPs for Brown Field, Gillespie Field and Montgomery Field with some modifications to safety and noise compatibility policies. There are changes to the allowable non-residential development intensities in Safety Zones 2, 3, 4 and 5; the City of San Diego's Noise Element in its General Plan will determine the compatibility of natural resource preserves, boarding kennels, visitor accommodations and zoological parks; and the infill development policy will be revised to 110 percent for residential and non-residential development. The ALUC also approved a reduction in the size of Safety Zone 2 for Gillespie Field's Runway 17/35 by 450 feet.

Now that ALUCPs for the Urban Airports are adopted, my focus will be on the proposed ALUCPs for Lindbergh Field and NAS North Island. I have every expectation that full EIRs will be done for both Lindbergh Field and NAS North Island, just as was done for MCAS Miramar.

### **Use of the 250-degree heading by commercial planes**

An Authority press release last summer said that from August 2009 until May 2010 during work on the north airfield taxiway, departures may be fanned causing a "slight increase" in aircraft flying over homes in South Point Loma. This is separate from the Green Build project adding ten new gates to Terminal 2 West, a dual level roadway and airfield improvements to be completed in late 2012.

During our meeting last fall, we discussed that the 250-degree heading is used by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to direct smaller general aviation aircraft on their departures an average of four times per day, sometimes including early morning departures by FedEx planes. PCPB representatives said their real concern is that as additional flights are added to Lindbergh Field, the wider departure heading would be used more often and additional noise will affect more Point Loma homes. It was decided that the PCPB request for data from the FAA on new commercial aviation use of the 250-degree heading would most appropriately be directed to Congresswoman Susan Davis.

Following our meeting, I spoke with Thella Bowen about making overflight data by commercial planes at the 250-degree heading during this August through May construction period available to the Peninsula community. Authority staff confirmed that the FAA, and not the Authority, determines which planes use which departure heading. I was assured by Ms. Bowen that the Authority would provide the requested data to the community.

Please share with me whatever information you have received to date, or receive in the future, on the use of the wider departure heading by commercial airplanes.

I will closely monitor ongoing discussions regarding the RASP, AMAP, Destination Lindbergh, and developing transit connections to Lindbergh Field. I encourage the PCPB to remain involved in the process and continue to voice the concerns of the Point Loma community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Kehoe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

CHRISTINE KEHOE  
Senator, 39<sup>th</sup> District