



October 31, 2000

2000-126

The Governor of California
President pro Tempore of the Senate
Speaker of the Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor and Legislative Leaders:

As requested by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, the Bureau of State Audits presents its audit report concerning the accuracy of the San Diego Unified Port District's (port district) noise-monitoring data, its process of evaluating airplane noise and flight tracks to respond to complaints, and whether the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) uses this information when considering the port district's application for a variance to California's noise standards.

This report concludes that although some community members consider the noise-monitoring system data suspect, we found the data to be accurate. Contributing to the community's distrust of the port district's data is the cessation of the county of San Diego's (county) Noise Control Hearing Board, which enforces the terms and conditions of Lindbergh Field's variance to the noise standards and audits the port district's noise-monitoring data. The port district, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), and the city of San Diego (city) all share some responsibility for resolving Lindbergh Field's noise problem. However, the port district's delays in implementing sound-attenuation programs, combined with the city's failure to consistently implement certain provisions of the comprehensive land use plan, have prevented further decreases in incompatible land use within Lindbergh Field's noise impact area. The SANDAG bears some responsibility for not ensuring that the city's regulations were consistent with the land use plan. Finally, we found that state regulations limit Caltrans' role to ensuring that the port district's noise-monitoring system meets state standards, to granting variances to the noise standards, and to reviewing quarterly noise-monitoring data for the purpose of assessing progress towards reducing Lindbergh Field's noise impact area.

Total aircraft operations at Lindbergh Field are projected to grow at an average annual rate of 2 percent through 2020. At this rate, Lindbergh Field will reach its maximum operating capacity by 2011. Therefore, the SANDAG, local agencies, and others must band together and decide whether to expand or relocate Lindbergh Field.

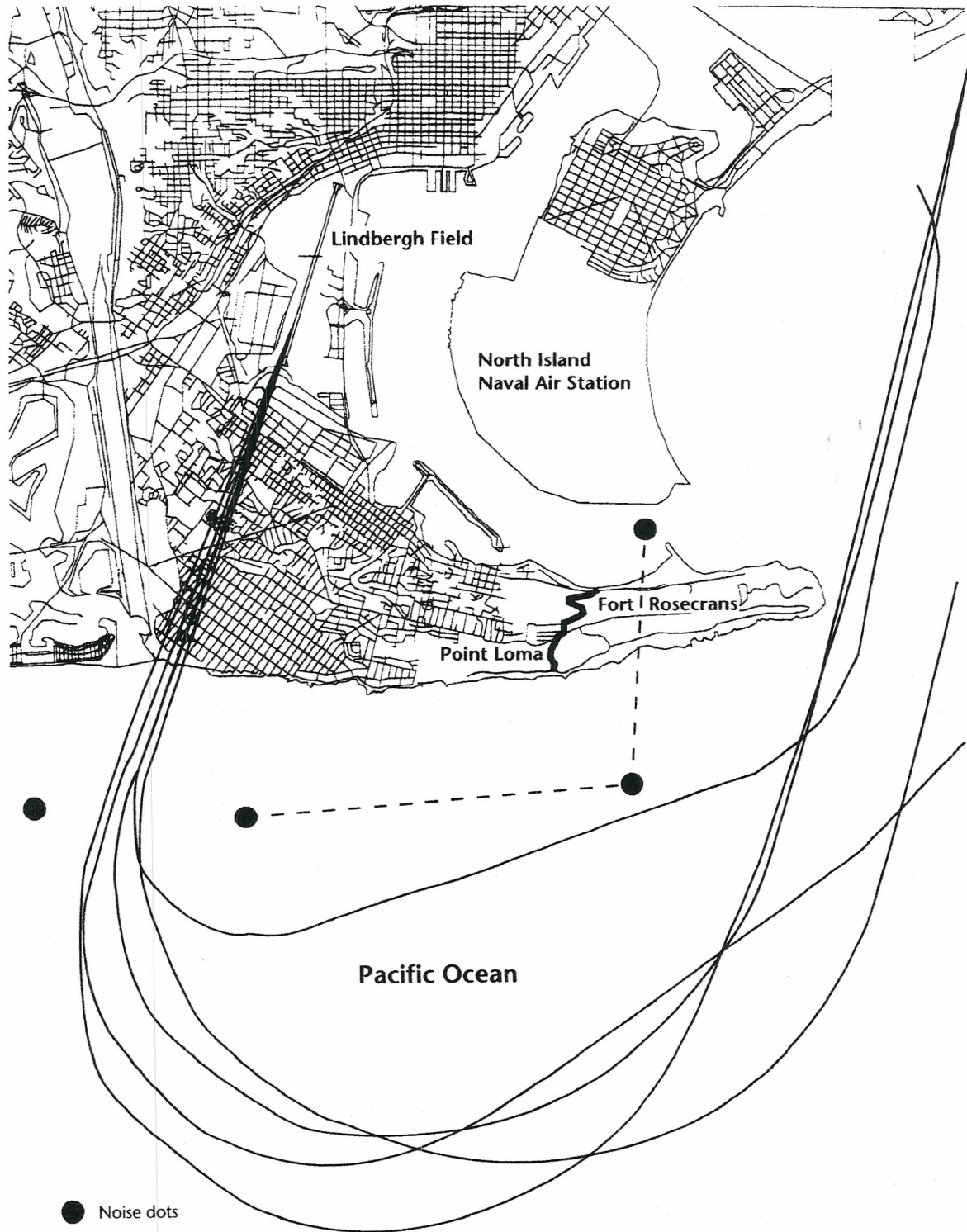
Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Howle

ELAINE M. HOWLE
State Auditor

FIGURE 4

Noise Dots Redirect Air Traffic Away From Point Loma



Source: San Diego Unified Port District Airport Noise Management Office.