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Contact: Amy Miller, EPA Press Office (617-918-1042)

For Immediate Release: April 22, 1999; Release # 99-4-32

EPA OPPOSES PROPOSED RUNWAY EXPANSION AT LOGAN AIRPORT

BOSTON - Citing noise and pollution impacts, environmental justice issues and insufficient attention to regional transportation planning, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today took a position against the Massachusetts Port Authority's proposed runway expansion at Logan Airport.

"Efficiency improvements are in order at Logan, to be sure," said John P. DeVillars, EPA's New England Administrator. "But not at the expense of already overburdened neighborhoods and not without much more attention to expanding the use of Amtrak and regional airports."

EPA's position against the runway was detailed in a 16-page letter submitted today to the Federal Aviation Administration. The letter represents EPA's formal written comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that the FAA and Massport prepared regarding the proposed expansion at Logan. The deadline for submitting public comments to the FAA is tomorrow.

"It is not reasonable to ask these communities to accept the impacts of further expansion at Logan unless and until two things happen," said DeVillars. "First, impacts from current operations must be fully mitigated, and second, every effort must be made to shift Logan traffic to high speed rail and other regional airports."

DeVillars also said, "I am willing to revisit the issue of Runway 14/32 in the future if Massport and the Commonwealth are able to address the concerns EPA and the affected communities have raised. It's a tall order but we are prepared to work with Massport and the community in tackling these issues. It is my hope that enhancing the use of Amtrak and other regional airports will eliminate the need for a new runway."

DeVillars added, "I want to acknowledge the valuable input we received from the community and Congressmen Joseph Moakley and Michael Capuano. It was the Congressional representatives who first called the important environmental justice issues to our attention. Their leadership on this issue has been exceptional."

Reiterating a position the agency took as far back as 1995, DeVillars said the proposed expansion is unacceptable because current operations and traffic at Logan already significantly burden surrounding neighborhoods. DeVillars questioned whether soundproofing for additional homes affected by the expansion will be

adequate and expressed concern that soundproofing of homes currently eligible has not been completed. He also criticized Massport for not honoring its commitments to make various access improvements at the Blue Line MBTA Station at Logan.

DeVillars said the FAA and Massport have failed to comply with federal environmental justice requirements in their evaluation of potential health impacts that the project would have on low-income and minority populations. DeVillars said the draft EIS focused solely on noise and failed to evaluate air quality, odor, traffic and other impacts that might cumulatively burden neighborhoods with large low-income and minority populations.

"The cursory attention to environmental justice issues in the draft proposal is not acceptable, especially for neighborhoods in East Boston, Chelsea and Roxbury that stand to see a threefold increase in aircraft overflights if this airport expansion goes through," DeVillars said.

DeVillars also faulted FAA and Massport for failing to pursue other steps that would better manage the growth problem and resulting delays at the airport. DeVillars said Massport should reduce the small plane mix from Logan peak traffic hours through a peak-period pricing strategy.

He also suggested that Massport and the FAA - as well as other state and federal transportation agencies - devote more attention to regional transportation improvements that would minimize traffic impacts at Logan and drive more business to outlying regional airports such as the Worcester Airport, T.F. Green Airport in Rhode Island and Manchester Airport in New Hampshire. Among DeVillars' specific suggestions: inner-city high speed rail connections supported by a North-South Station link; efficient mass transit access to and between the regional airports; and free shuttle service between South Station and Logan.

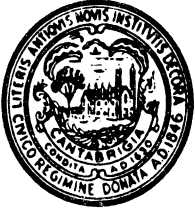
"Absent a comprehensive plan, this expansion project will do little to address flight delays," DeVillars said. "Massport and the FAA would do better to focus on developing a regional transportation strategy, not a narrowly-focused runway project at Logan."

DeVillars also recognized the efforts made by Massport and its director, but said it is not enough.

"Massport has made very real strides towards being a better neighbor. They have instituted clean fuel vehicles, park and ride facilities, and hazardous materials management. But regrettably more needs to be done - soundproofing, enhanced public transportation, parking policies and a better coordinated strategy with Amtrak and other airports," said DeVillars. "I appreciate and respect the efforts Peter Blute and his team have made to work with us on this issue. We intend to build on that cooperative spirit."

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14.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

May 10, 1999

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report # 99-2 regarding the Massport Community Advisory Committee and the scheduling of a public hearing with representatives of Massport to discuss the construction of runway 14/32, please be advised of the following:

I have appointed a City of Cambridge representative to the Community Advisory Committee: Richard Easler, of the Community Development Department. Kurt Walters, a Cambridge resident, also serves on the Committee.

City Clerk Margaret Drury tried on several occasions to schedule a hearing before the City Council with Massport on the runway expansion plan at Logan Airport. Massport indicated that, because it has received many requests for hearings, it is not able to accommodate the City's request.

For your additional information, please find attached a recent press release issued by the Environmental Protection Agency opposing the proposed runway expansion at Logan Airport.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

Attachment

Consent Agenda #14

Relative to AW Rpt. #99-2,
regarding the Massport Community
Advisory Committee and the
scheduling of a public
hearing with representatives
of Massport to discuss the
construction of runway 14/32.

In City Council May 10, 1999

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