



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE
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June 30, 2008

Terry English
Federal Aviation Administration
11 Murphy Drive
Nashua, NH 03062
terry.english@faa.gov

VIA E-MAIL AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

Dear Ms. English:

I would like to thank you for your involvement in the Boston Logan Airport Noise Study (BLANS). As the State Senator for the Second Middlesex district, covering the communities of Medford and Somerville, I am writing to offer commentary on the study's recommendations.

I have received increasingly distressing complaints from constituents in both communities concerning dissonance caused by seemingly low and increasingly loud overflights. These complaints correlate to the well-documented increase in the use of Runway 33L, for which I have received no satisfactory explanation. Massport has cited more frequent strong Northwest winds compared to the previous year, however, 33L has been used no more than 6% for the past 15 years. Are we to believe that northwest winds are at a 15 year high? Without warning or consideration Somerville, a primarily-residential community, has been given a significant burden.

The strain my constituents feel is not simply the result of the tripling in overflights; but also because it appears that the FAA has been reluctant to admit the severity of the problem for people in these communities. The folks in Somerville and Medford deserve more than excuses and protocol. They deserve more than technical jargon and red tape. They deserve recognition and relief.

One of my concerns is that concrete action needs to be taken within a reasonable time frame. Phase 3 of BLANS is when the important issue of runway allocations will finally be addressed; however, this piece of the study is many years off. The increases in the use of runway 33L in 2007 happened essentially overnight without community involvement; yet studying runway allocations is not going to take place for years. I would hope that Phase 3 of the study, which could offer clues for real relief for my constituents, will be expedited.

Presently, the city of Somerville is not within the 65 dB Day Night Average Sound Level (DNL) contour and does not qualify for soundproofing grants. If the FAA wishes to increase the use of 33L such as

they have, reevaluation of the DNL contours is called for. There are, however, no permanent noise monitoring stations in Somerville; in fact, the closest monitor is in Everett. In the future, I expect the lack of a permanent noise monitor to be remedied. In the interest of this study, it would seem necessary to have portable noise monitoring devices be placed in Wellington Station, in Winter Hill, in the middle of Ten Hills, and/or in Draw 7 Park. Only then can a proper baseline and eventual solution be developed for these communities.

By addressing community concerns and balancing the use of 33L, I believe this study has the potential to offer some future respite to our fraught citizens. In the mean time, I would like to see an immediate roll-back to pre-increase runway allocation; at least until a legitimate Federal environmental review can be conducted.

In addition to noise, there are significant cumulative environmental justice impacts from the increased air traffic on eastern Somerville. Not only did MassPort, FAA and their consultants not look at noise impacts relative to population densities, they certainly have not been looking at census tract or block group level noise impacts on environmental justice populations, as required by Massachusetts EOEEA and MPO policies. That Somerville could be getting the most highway vehicle miles of travel per square mile of land area, the most diesel rail miles of travel per square mile of land area – both out of 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts – and now a tripling of jet overflight without any due process, speaks to a stunning lack of protection of the residents who live here, especially in eastern Somerville.

Again, thank you for working with Massport and the Community Advisory Council (CAC) to develop and carry out this study. The BLANS should be a positive step in addressing our concerns and enacting an effective solution. I urge you to act quickly to reduce the tremendous burden currently being placed on the residents of Medford and Somerville. My constituents and I will be following your progress closely, and I look forward to good news.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia D. Jehlen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PATRICIA D. JEHLLEN
STATE SENATOR