



ALLIANCE OF RESIDENTS CONCERNING O'HARE, Inc.

“a grass roots organization”

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**Regarding O'Hare Modernization Program, Environmental Impact Statement
Public Scoping Meeting**

Oral Testimony of Jack Saporito for the Alliance of Residents Concerning O'Hare, Inc.

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I am Jack Saporito, Executive Director of the Alliance of Residents Concerning O'Hare. Locally, the Alliance of Residents Concerning O'Hare (ARECO) represents members in 41 communities, including Chicago, that are affected by O'Hare Airport operations.

O'Hare is located in an area of dense development. At least several hundreds of thousands of Chicago-area residents oppose O'Hare expansion. The heavy lobbying and marketing of this ill-conceived scheme is fooling many others, including policy makers.

Nationally, I just resigned from the US-Citizens Aviation Watch Association, which the leading public-advocacy group focusing on aviation issues, representing various municipalities and organizations; it speaks for about 1.5 million individuals in the United States. Internationally, the Association is also a non-governmental organization, representing member and associate organizations in 27 countries.

Among others, our membership includes physicians and individuals who are employed in the aviation and aerospace industries: pilots, air-traffic controllers, employees of NASA and Boeing, Williams Aviation Consultants, and Baylor University's School of Aviation and Air Sciences, as well as cities, citizens and civic groups. As a result, we have in-depth knowledge of the issues, bringing strong factual evidence to the table.

As a result, of the over 13 years that I have been doing this, I have been involved in over 100 airport environmental processes. I have never seen before what you are trying to do here with this Environmental Impact Statement process. There is no O'Hare 20-30 year plan, no Master or Development Plan and/or Airport Layout Plan; therefore, this Daley-Ryan deal that is not written down is only a concept. So how can the FAA ask the public to provide "scoping inputs" to an EIS process and, for that matter, how can the EIS process even proceed?

As you well know, this exercise violates the National Environmental Policy Act that governs this process and this exercise is nothing more than a waste of the taxpayer's time and money.

Is this Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) exercise anything more than a public relations stunt for Senator Durbin's airport expansion bill?

This would be funny if it was not so serious and the lives and quality of life of so many were not in jeopardy.

We oppose the expansion of Chicago's O'Hare Airport for many reasons that include:

First, one must ask the question, "How could putting in more runways and hundreds of thousands of more flights into O'Hare relieve congestion?"

According to a Government Accounting Office report, building more runways is not the answer to O'Hare congestion. Among other problems stated in the report, they would be overcrowded before they were finished, and there are serious questions as to whether the parallel runway concept would cause more weather delays, as the airport is situated in the northern climate zone.

Airports rank among the top ten industrial emission sources, and yet they are virtually unregulated. We are extremely concerned about serious public health, environment, noise, and other quality of life problems that are related to air transport operations and the limited protections for them that the O'Hare expansion bills will strip away.

Along with noise, O'Hare Airport and aircraft operations produce massive and unusual types of air, water, and ground pollution...all of which are health hazardous and potentially deadly. As a result, we already have a significant public health problem that is epidemic in nature, affecting a large percentage of the population that lives even many miles away from the airport, both under and distant from the flight tracks of this mega-airport that has already about three times the number of flights than most all other major airports.

As evidence that aircraft emissions are the culprit and not other sources, we will be introducing select pages from an US-Environmental Protection Agency 10-mile vicinity cancer study of Chicago's Midway Airport, showing that it is the aircraft engines and not the cars and trucks that are most problematic to public health: "Overall, emissions from aircraft operated at Midway in 1990 contribute up to 99% of the total cancer cases. This was expected since the vehicular emissions estimated at Midway are insignificant compared to the aircraft emissions at Midway."

Studies already show strong correlations that O'Hare Airport and its aircraft kill hundreds of people a year, from cancer alone. We have not looked at other diseases such as cardiac and respiratory, but we expect them to be significant.

Any attempt to weaken our environmental laws at this critical time should be considered an attack on the American public. Which is what this process today is trying to shortcut.

- This "airport modernization" is of such a scale that, for all practical purposes, it is a brand new airport. The FAA and the Environmental Protection Agency would never allow such a new airport to be placed in this location without huge environmental buffers of thousands of acres. The negative environmental impact will be massive and we expect the FAA to review this massive environmental destruction as due to a proposed NEW airport, not a modification of an existing one.
- The "proposal", as roughly outlined by the FAA in the "Scoping Document", calls for elimination of runways, addition of new runways and lengthening of existing runways to

excessive lengths, for example 9R-27L to 13,000 feet. The implication is that this lengthening is being done ONLY to accommodate the new, super-huge Airbus A380, manufactured in France. This not-made-in-the-USA 555-passenger 4-engine plane will weigh in at 560 TONS and carry 82,000 gallons of jet fuel. We expect the FAA to fully evaluate the environmental safety, noise and pollution aspects of operating such behemoths over the heads of the local residents, and precisely why such long runways are required.

- We expect that we do not have to tell the FAA that the proposed runway spacings are too close for safety and that if operated by special waiver, any capacity increases will be fictitious.
- "Planes are getting quieter" is not true, as planes are getting larger in the future and large, new planes are just as noisy or noisier as smaller, older planes. Airport "modernization" to accommodate these larger planes is thus destined to increase noise, including nighttime noise from huge freighters. Newer "Stage 4" aircraft noise requirements are at best a joke and are "timed" to allow the A380 (and others?) to sneak under the wire and only qualify to "stage 3" levels. O'Hare should be restricted to only "stage 4" compliant aircraft for any 4-engine aircraft.
- We are in favor of computer simulations of environmental pollution effects, as that is the only way to predict future negative impacts on the environment of the projected huge additional amounts of health-damaging pollution emissions from both airport ground operations and approaching/departing aircraft in the area. The FAA will once again claim that their "Emission Dispersion Modeling System", or EDMS, correctly and accurately characterizes resulting pollutant concentrations over a wide area and over an entire "average" year. We believe that not to be the case here and, notwithstanding the FAA's "mandate" to use EDMS, expect that such use will be justified in a detailed manner, including any and all meteorological considerations and including the lack of existing pollutant monitoring verification stations in various suburban areas.
- As in the past, we expect the FAA to attempt to disassociate all aircraft not on the ground from airport pollution emissions and to claim that such aircraft are "mobile" in nature and that the EPA has not set pollution requirements for such "mobile" emissions. We reject such obvious ploys to hide the truth from the highly negatively impacted public and hope that the FAA will, for once, address this horrible pollution impact in a consolidated and honest manner.

O'Hare's aircraft alone, emit more volatile organic compounds than all of the 70 Illinois electrical power plants combined; carbon monoxide emissions are as high as 60% of the amount from all of these plants! The severe impact when combined with O'Hare ground operations, more than doubles the extraordinary massive amount of pollution. Attempts to minimize these facts by burying the pollution in very wide area total statistics is Enron-esque and disingenuous.

Because commercial jet aircraft are a major cause of climate change and O'Hare operations greatly contributes to the problem, there should be a global EIS done that includes this project.

Also, as evidence that flight operations at O'Hare Airport must be reduced, not increased as has been proposed, we are introducing a new study of O'Hare Airport cancer epidemic problems.

It seems clear that O'Hare Airport and aircraft pollution generation must be substantially reduced in the near future, not increased, in order to avoid future medical crises."

Constructing new runways or reconfiguring the existing O'Hare (basically building a new airport) will significantly harm communities, including neighborhoods, schools, businesses and homes, because of the airport and aircraft's extraordinary amounts and types of noise, water, ground and toxic air pollution, property takings, tax base losses and other quality of life issues. These problems should be reduced or eliminated, not unacceptably increased, as this O'Hare expansion does, especially since there are better alternatives.

The O'Hare expansion plan places reported backroom deals above our health and that of our children's health and future. The politically connected, pushing O'Hare expansion, are acutely aware of the damage it does and that is why they have introduced the Ryan-Daley deal and the language with associated case law that will take away the meager protections that do exist.

Oppose O'Hare expansion! Instead, support the reasonable alternatives that the O'Hare expansion bill(s) would take away. These include taking this issue away from the FAA, operational and management controls; as well as, sending unnecessary flights to other airports such as Wayports, "Highways in the Skies". That would make room for the desired, new international flights that will result from the economic globalization treaties, which will create meaningful jobs. And for the long-term, provide that our country and our region build a world-class high-speed rail system that will complement commercial air transport to achieve a balanced and sustainable intermodal transportation system that will benefit all of us.

AReCO believes that exposing babies and young children to excessive noise and toxic air pollution and the other significant health and quality of life problems that O'Hare Airport and its aircraft already causes is a form of child abuse. Adding to that is despicable.

Mayor Daley may not care about the health, welfare and safety of the thousands or more of the Chicago citizens that are affected by O'Hare, but we do. We have a vital interest in assuring that any modifications of the airport comply with all existing laws and regulations.

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Protect our children from airport child abuse, protect our communities, safeguard our lives and future – defeat the O’Hare expansion plan and support better alternatives.

Thank you.

We will be submitting a more detailed scoping at a later date.
