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AVIATION EXPERTS: O'HARE PLAN "BLOWS WIND"

Arlington Heights, IL—Independent and locally experienced aviation experts have reported to Mothers Against Airport Pollution (MAAP) and the Alliance of Residents Concerning O'Hare (AReCO) that the Chicago O'Hare airport expansion plan is not technically workable.

Williams Aviation Consultants, an Arizonian based company, which has members of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) air traffic service and has specific knowledge of traffic flows and issues in the Chicago area, has volunteered its independent findings to the two protection organizations.

Among Williams' findings are:

- * Chicago's revised plan will have a drastic reduction in benefit from the increases that were claimed when the project was introduced.
- * It is not possible that the en-route portion of the air traffic control system could accept the number of departing aircraft per hour that would be necessary to keep the airport from becoming saturated.
- * Storms occurring between O'Hare and the destination or departure airports result in in-trail restrictions to aircraft that have to transit the area that is encountering the storm activity. When these conditions occur, terminal delays will occur at O'Hare due to problems in other parts of the country that are impacting the en-route air traffic control system.
- * Historically, consultants who work for airports are able to inflate the benefits of airport construction projects through their modeling of the throughput of the airport.
 - o Modeled departure airport project capacity shows the aircraft are only modeled for a short distance after takeoff and they are then dropped from further analysis. Thus, normal en-route delays are not considered and the modeling results show a greatly inflated increase in capacity.
 - o If modeling were to include the en-route portion of the flight, the increase in capacity would be even more minimal than Chicago's revised down figures.
 - o Airport consultants model arrival capacity in a fashion that will show a very high capacity arrival rate that cannot be achieved in a real world environment.
- * The database for the modeling was constructed in the manner that gives inflated results; thus, assumptions are not achievable with live aircraft.
- * As mentioned previously, en-route weather will usually result in an increased number of miles between aircraft on the same route, resulting in delays when departing aircraft must wait on the ground for an appropriate gap. Depending on the volume of aircraft departing O'Hare, ground delays can result in a lack of gates or parking space for aircraft that vacate the gate but cannot depart the airport.
- * Historically, severe weather along the Mississippi River in the warmer months that occur almost daily result in in-trail restriction on aircraft arriving and departing O'Hare from the West. These thunderstorms will impact the overhead stream of traffic from the east coast going west and from the west coast going east, resulting in delays for O'Hare traffic due to a lack of surplus space in the overhead stream.

- * The consultants have not seen any substantial comments from the air traffic controllers at O'Hare Tower/TRACON or from the Chicago En-route Air Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) regarding the claims of increased capacity.
- * The current airport is able to provide more departing aircraft to the Center than it is capable of handling. Additional runways will increase O'Hare's ability to provide the Center with more aircraft, but will not provide the Center with any increased capability to handle those aircraft. As a result, O'Hare will be constrained by the capacity of the Center, which is not being increased.
- * The Center is also constrained on the number of arrival aircraft that it can provide to the tower. The Center cannot provide anywhere near the number that even Chicago's revised down figures on the proposed runway configuration could handle. It is not possible for the en-route system to handle the increased number of aircraft that the consultant has projected.
- * It was noted with interest that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) spokesman stated that wind is no longer a factor for the aircraft of today. Yet, as Williams works on projects at other airports they see controllers changing the direction of landing and takeoff to align the airport into the wind. "Perhaps the FAA spokesman was merely passing wind with his comment."

(It should be noted that Williams Aviation Consultants suggested that any of the FAA spokesman's statements should be checked with at least one other source before accepting them as anything more than rhetoric.)

- * Williams has seen many fly quiet programs, all are voluntary, and it is difficult to distinguish the "fly-quiets" from the "no fly-quiets."
- * There are a set number of arrival and departure routes into and out of the Chicago area. It is not realistic to assume that additional routes can or will be developed to accommodate the O'Hare project. Without additional routes for aircraft to operate on, the en-route air traffic control system will still be governed by the same constraints that are in place today.
- * The independent aviation experts are also of the opinion that even if O'Hare builds the east-west parallel runways, the existing runways will not be torn out and will continue to be used. The Federal Government paid for those runways, they are still serviceable and the FAA has not stated that they are allowing them to be removed.

"Besides these significant air and ground side technological problems and the shocking public health consequences, there are so many others with what really is the downtown Chicago businesses' O'Hare expansion plan, states Jack Saporito AReCO and MAAP's spokesperson. Even if we take their wildly exaggerated claims of the numbers of jobs the O'Hare expansion will create for fact, it will cost about \$600,000 per job creation and that is just plan bad business! The plan is just poor and doesn't make any sense!"