

June 29, 2001

News Release

Source: Alliance of Residents Concerning O'Hare and US-Citizens Aviation Watch Association

Daley's Act is Negligent

The Alliance of Residents Concerning O'Hare and US-Citizens Aviation Watch Association are adamantly opposed to any re-configuration of O'Hare Airport that would add more flights. Adding more flight operations will further exacerbate already unacceptable public health, noise, environmental, and quality of life problems that affect millions of people in Northern Illinois¹.

It is well known that this expansion is not really to relieve delays^{2&3} but to add more flights that are expected to at least double by 2010⁴ and every eight to ten years thereafter⁵.

Daley's plan changes the original configuration of the airport exposing new communities and their residents to airport and aircraft harms. Over the years, communities planned and zoned the growth for existing airport operations. Since harmful airport and aircraft noise and pollution extends for more than 20 miles away from the airport and several miles on the sides from an aircraft, thousands of more people will be exposed that never have been before.

Most communities planned their land use zoning based on existing airport runway configurations: Any modification of runways would lower residential land values; thereby, decreasing community tax bases. That would affect how our schools are funded and cost local taxpayers more in taxes. Currently many commercial properties in the O'Hare area, particularly Cook County, have not increased in value over the last 8 years.

The new configuration could be used to support Very Large Aircraft (VLA) which are able to carry over 800 passengers and tons more cargo. These super-jumbos would bring more pollution and possibly noise not only from the flight itself but also

¹ For documentation see: www.areco.org and www.us-caw.org

² *Phony Flight Delays*. US-Citizens Aviation Watch Association. March 5, 2001.

³ Massive delays, at least in part, are manufactured: A 1995 U.S. Department of Transportation Report to Congress: A Study of the High Density Rule finds that if operations were to increase above 155 per hour at O'Hare, massive system-wide delays would ensue; such has been the case.

⁴ The Aviation Demand forecasts grossly underestimate the projections in the NAS plan. Largely because of economic globalization, over the next few years, the number of flights will increase dramatically with the extraordinary doubling by the year 2010, as predicted to occur by the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) in a recent, internal document. National Aviation Research Plans 2000. Airports Technology Program. 2.2 Airports Technology Area Description Mission. 1st paragraph.

⁵ Whitelegg, J. and N. Williams. John Moores University. The Plane Truth: Aviation and the Environment.

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from the hundreds of cars, taxis, busses, and semi-trucks that would have to service just one flight operation. The increased traffic, especially heavy semi-trucks would cause more road damage, thus increasing our taxes. This is not even taking into consideration the 5-10-15 additional regional jets that it would take to get the super-jumbo passengers and cargo to their final destination.

Capping the number of flights from a runway or airport is a fallacy. The federal government can lift flight limits.

Existing public health & environmental controls do not work and adequate technological solutions are decades away. Aviation produces vast quantities and unusual types of air, water, noise and ground pollution and is a significant contributor to climate change. O'Hare Airport and the aircraft's extraordinary pollution poses serious and deadly health risks to a large percentage of the population that are downwind of the airport or, within numerous miles of and under the flight paths of the aircraft⁶.

Increasing the already high concentrations of pollution will have disastrous consequences for our children and us. We already have the dubious distinction of having some of the worst air quality in the nation.

At the very least, Daley's plan is woefully inadequate to protect public health, general welfare of the public and our environment. It does not adequately buffer the communities and residents from harmful airport and aircraft operations. Modern environmental buffers are needed such as those at Denver and other airports. To be humane, perhaps thousands of homes and businesses would have to be razed to provide communities minimal protection.

Daley's plan is nothing more than a greedy death warrant for communities and our children. According to its own figures, O'Hare airport is the single largest polluter in Illinois, if not the worst in the country. A Los Angeles School District study shows a significant increase in cancer risk with the addition of just 5,000 annual flights (15 flights a day).

Chicago Mayor Richard Daley's call for a new runway configuration to increase capacity at O'Hare can only be considered irresponsible.

The airport change would bring more unacceptable environmental and public health problems that cannot be adequately mitigated. The new flight tracks and additional flights would have a vastly increased risk of cancer and other "airport-aircraft

⁶ Harmful airport impacts are grossly underreported to local communities since they are not required to report many of their emissions.

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diseases” to what already is a totally unacceptable, epidemic health problem. This situation definitely has the potential to turn into another asbestos/tobacco industry disaster.

Mayor Daley, what needs to be done to protect the health of millions of area residents is to put the super-jumbos and the increased flights into a new, well designed and environmentally buffered intermodal airport far enough away from the urban population.

The Alliance and the Association echo the voice of the US-EPA on its comments regarding the Boston Logan expansion: Enough is enough, clean up the environmental and public health mess they have, send the planes elsewhere to an environmentally safer airport that is well-buffered and strictly zoned, and develop other modes of mass transit such as a world-class high speed rail system.

We call for open and honest public debate of Mayor Daley's expansion plan.

Since today is an Ozone Alert day, one wonders just how many people O'Hare's pollution will kill today?

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(Editor: For more information including several health and emission studies from various global sources see: www.areco.org . Page down to: *See why O'Hare Airport toxins affect you and your family.*)

Contact: Jack Saporito, 847-506-0670