

# US-Citizens Aviation Watch Association

a not-for-profit corporation

*"Protecting the public's health, environment, property and promoting safety."*

P.O. Box 1702 → Arlington Hts., IL 60006 → Fax: 847/506-0202 → Tel: 847/506-0670

*Executive Committee:*

*President*

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*Vice-president*

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*Officers:*

Steven Debreceeny - Baltimore \*BWI

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September 4, 2001

Via Facsimile and Hand Delivery

Dear Governor Ryan:

With the comments that you heard at the O'Hare Airport public meetings, very little was stated as to why Mayor Daley's plan compromises air safety and should not be built.

Have you considered that the current level of over 1.7 million flights annually penetrating O'Hare's Class "B" Airspace (within a 25 mile radius of O'Hare) causes a very high level of congestion in the airspace and the proposed increase to more than 2.5 million flights would be unacceptably dangerous to human life both in the air and on the ground? Four of Illinois' busiest airports, Midway, O'Hare, DuPage and Palwaukee -- plus several many smaller general aviation airports are located within the same class "B" Airspace and they are also projected to increase operations. This congestion of aircraft traffic is a terrible threat to flight safety, especially under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) conditions (bad weather).

Increasing the planes in the O'Hare Airspace from 290 to 430 an hour, for 16 hours each day, 365 days each year, is an accident waiting to happen. With Mayor Daley's expansion plan, what will a pilot do to avoid an accident, especially during a go-around when confronted with other aircraft? How safe will those hundreds of passengers be in those aircraft? What danger will all those flights present to people who are on the ground?

- ❖ It is almost commonplace now to witness evasive action between aircraft in the area. To add new flights can only make the situation worse.
- ❖ The adequacy of new accident avoidance technology, such as the Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System (TCAS), is questionable, and ultimately the safety of the aircraft remains in human hands.
- ❖ Our investigation has shown that no studies have been done to determine whether the density of O'Hare's Airspace should be additionally regulated for safety by setting density limits.

*Advocating a sustainable, equitable and accountable aviation industry.*

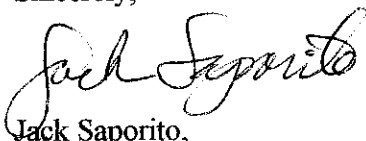
- ❖ Congestion and delays at O'Hare are caused by the airlines' over-scheduling and poor management of their flights, and can be controlled now by management techniques, as we had when the high-density rule was fully in place. This is already being done at New York's LaGuardia.
- ❖ The existing runway configuration is set up for the weather in the northern climate. The configurations for Dallas and Atlanta are not comparable because they are in southern climate zone. The proposed new runway layout will neither "modernize" the layout nor improve delays during bad weather because under certain wind conditions six of the eight runways would have to shut down. In addition, the four interior parallel runways could not be used simultaneously under IFR conditions because they do not meet FAA's minimum separation standards.

Governor, over the years and at your Des Plaines hearing, I have given you plenty of testimony containing facts about the horrible public health and environmental problems that exist today, which even with new technology (that the industry "claims" will help) will not adequately mitigate the problems for decades.

- ❖ Many independent studies have shown that airport and aircraft-generated pollution are potentially lethal to people who live and work even many miles from airports. At least one airport health study (by the Los Angeles School District for the Santa Monica Airport) found that flight volumes of only about fifteen (15) jets per day were associated with significantly increased cancer rates among residents living under the flight paths. Yet, Mayor Daley's proposal is to add hundreds of thousands of more flights!
- ❖ Further, as the Chicago metropolitan area is a severe non-attainment area for ozone, the Clean Air Act's "conformity" provisions would prohibit any further increases in flights at O'Hare. The amount of NOx that is produced during takeoffs is so great that adding only a few additional jet operations will trigger these provisions and would be well over the de-minimis level.

Governor, besides the serious and deadly epidemic health problems that affect one-quarter of Illinois' population that you have stated are caused by O'Hare, what about our safety? Certainly the answer is not to add more flights "Til the sky is blotted out with planes." Please protect our health, safety and welfare by saying "No" to any modification of the airport that will add more flights.

Sincerely,



Jack Saporito,

Executive Director of the Alliance of Residents Concerning O'Hare  
President of US-Citizens Aviation Watch Association