

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0552

October 30, 2015

Mr. Michael P. Huerta
Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Re: Ongoing Concerns Related to Proposed SoCal Metroplex Project at SAN

Dear Administrator Huerta:

Though the official public comment period for the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) associated with the SoCal Metroplex Project recently closed, I write today to emphasize important questions raised by my constituents in order to help them get clearer answers as officials begin to sift through the many comments that were submitted.

Previously, I, along with many San Diego residents, submitted comments to the EA emphasizing the importance of maintaining waypoint LOWMA, near the tip of Point Loma over which eastbound flights departing from San Diego International Airport (SAN) must pass to the south. Additionally, the potential for a broadening of the departure "fan separation" beyond the historical limits (265 to 295 degrees). These proposed changes have the potential for significant negative impacts on communities that have long had a 'good neighbor' relationship with the FAA and the San Diego airport.

In the mid-1990s, Point Loma residents, through their elected representatives, engaged the FAA locally to come up with a departure paths agreement. Together, the residents and the FAA agreed to install "noise dots" on the Southern California TRACON monitors so that controllers would direct all departures through a gate of two dots to the west of SAN and a dot beyond the tip of Point Loma for eastbound aircraft to go around. The resulting agreement came to be known as the "red dot" agreement (Noise Agreement).

The Noise Agreement is important for several reasons. First, it represents what the community and the FAA have agreed to as acceptable standards and practices for flight operations. Destroying such a precedent in a unilateral manner sends these residents the message that their federal government may not keep its promises. Second, it is proof that these residents are willing to do their part; they understand that their proximity to a major international airport requires some reasonable accommodations of them. They are not attempting to block the FAA's goals of airspace optimization. But they do want to know that their realistic and reasonable concerns are being heard and taken into consideration, consistent with past Noise Agreement decision making. Finally, the agreement shows that the FAA and the community are capable of working together at a regional level towards an agreeable conclusion. Perhaps the "red dot" agreement, negotiated close to twenty years ago, is in

need of an update. Who better to provide input than the same residents who have co-existed with an international airport for decades?

The FAA's goal of the optimization of airspace and the supporting airspace management structure is commendable, as is the desire to reduce fuel usage. One question that I would like answered is how much fuel will be saved specifically by the proposed NextGen changes FAA contemplates allowing in the immediate vicinity of these SAN neighborhoods? And what is the dollar savings associated with that reduced fuel usage, or with any other specific related benefits resulting from the NextGen proposals for SAN departures? Residents have asked me for this answer, and I'd like to be able to provide it.

Even though the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 called for a "categorical exclusion" for all new RNAV and RNP procedures, as the SoCal Metroplex is, the FAA has decided to conduct an environmental assessment. However, FAA outreach has been minimal and dismissive. At a meeting last week, the regional airport authority expressed a willingness to work with the community to mitigate the impacts of recent and future operations, as has the local FAA. I believe that the community has a right to expect the same from decision-makers in Washington D.C. I'm committed to doing my part, and I'm counting on FAA leadership to do the same.

I understand that the myriad comments submitted to the SoCal Metroplex EA will not be responded to before the end of this calendar year, but I respectfully request a response to the questions I've raised here as quickly as possible.

Please keep me informed of additional steps the FAA will be taking to address the concerns raised by my constituents.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Scott Peters
Member of Congress