



LOS ANGELES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

November 2, 2010

Herb Glasgow
Chief of Airport Planning
City of Los Angeles World Airports
1 World Way, Room 218
Los Angeles, California 90045

Re: Revised Notice of Preparation ("NOP") of Los Angeles International Airport ("LAX") Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIR") for LAX's Specific Plan Amendment Study ("SPAS")

Dear Mr. Glasgow:

The release of the NOP marks the beginning of a key phase in the ongoing modernization effort at LAX – a vital part of the economic future of our region. The next steps that Los Angeles World Airports ("LAWA") takes to make essential – and long overdue – improvements to LAX will have a major impact on that economic future. Accordingly, the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), an organization dedicated to promoting job growth, economic expansion and preserving the overall global competitiveness of Los Angeles County, urges all those involved to move forward right away with the SPAS planning process.

Recently, the LAEDC helped facilitate the creation of Los Angeles County's first-ever, consensus Strategic Plan for Economic Development. This effort brought together over 1,070 stakeholders from business, labor, environmental organizations and other community-based groups to develop a plan to create more jobs, grow our economy, and invigorate our communities. On July 14th, the Los Angeles City Council unanimously voted (14-0) to support the plan.

One of the consensus plan's five core aspirational goals is to "Build a 21st Century Infrastructure." A modern, functional infrastructure not only underpins everything we do here economically, but without a modern, 21st Century infrastructure our quality of life would be greatly diminished. One of this goal's touchstone strategies is to modernize LAX – our region's most valuable fixed asset.

Modernizing LAX is necessary to conveniently and safely accommodate the forecasted increase in air cargo and passenger traffic that are expected during the coming years once the economy recovers, reclaim some of LAX's lost market share and the jobs that go with that market share – lost to other Western U.S. airports including Denver, Phoenix and most notably San Francisco, and, of course, boost customer satisfaction, which has been at a real low point as of late. In fact, a recent J.D. Power Study ranked LAX 19th out of the 20 largest North American Airports in terms of customer satisfaction. It is simply unacceptable to have a Second or Third World airport in a First World region such as Los Angeles. Hence, we must all work together to modernize the airport to reverse this downward trend. Simply put, it is a matter of local pride, public safety, and economic and job growth.

At stake is whether or not we can take pride in LAX as our "front door" to the world – or be left to accept the airport as a depleted relic of an earlier time, eschewed by pilots, passengers and (high-value) cargo in favor of

newer, safer and more inviting airport locations. At stake, is whether or not the new class of technological advanced Group VI super-jumbo jets from half a world away will simply fly over LAX on their way to Denver, Phoenix or some other destination, taking passengers, commerce and the high-value freight those planes carry away from our region. At stake is whether or not LAX – and by extension the Los Angeles region – will have an increased role to play in the global economy, or be an anchor preventing us from competing effectively in that world economy.

Regretfully, there is still much disagreement over the future of North Airfield safety improvements. For over 15 years, Los Angeles city officials have failed to act on the advice of aviation safety experts to increase separation between the runways and build a centerline taxiway.

Indeed, five safety studies have corroborated what the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) and airport planners from around the nation already agree on: namely, that something must be done to make LAX safer and reduce the number of runway incursions, which quite simply means two or more airplanes occupying the same runway at any time. In addition, a report released in this past February by a six-member academic panel (with simulations conducted at the NASA Ames Research Center) concluded that moving the northernmost runway 340 feet north to make room for a centerline taxiway would reduce the risk of a fatal runway collision by a noteworthy 55 percent. For its part, the FAA, in a statement issued after the release of the report, said: "Multiple studies by airport design and layout experts have concluded that reconfiguring the south and north airfields are the best safety and efficiency solutions." Even FAA Administrator J. Randolph Babbitt (an airline pilot who has flown in and out of LAX hundreds of times) has weighed in with his concerns, saying: "The status quo is not good enough for the FAA, and the City of Los Angeles should not view it as good enough for the traveling public. Everything possible must be done to make the north airfield as safe as it can be."

There are a number of reasons why incursions occur. But the last line of defense is what the pilot in the cockpit can and will do to avert disaster. More space between runways means pilots can find a safe place to wait before receiving clearance to cross the inner departure runway to get the terminals. Without this extra space, one wrong move, one failure to yield, one miscommunication from the control tower could mean catastrophe on the airfield. It happened in 1991, when a USAir airplane landed on top of a Skywest commuter jet, killing 34.

Implementing changes like a centerline taxiway and more space between runways to easily and safely handle new large aircraft like the Airbus A380 and Boeing 747-8 are critical to making LAX the modern, efficient and safe gateway to the world that it ought to be. What's more, advances in airline technology mean that moving the north runway farther north enough to install such a taxiway will not make it louder in the communities of Westchester and Playa del Rey, or pollute the air of the residents who live there. Creating more space and installing this taxiway will simply make our airport safer for the 54 million plus annual passengers who use LAX and its North Airfield runways, which were designed in 1956 to accommodate smaller, piston-engine aircraft. The South Airfield Improvement Project, completed a few years ago, has already proved this. According to the FAA, the reconfiguration on the South Airfield, adding a centerline taxiway, "has eliminated the most serious runway incursions there and reduced all types of incursions by nearly 80 percent."

In conclusion, the LAEDC believes that Los Angeles desperately needs and deserves a modern, safe airport, with a North Airfield that is reconfigured to at-once serve the needs of the flying public, easily handle the

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commercial needs of a region with a nation-sized (\$500 billion) economy and make the airport the job creation catalyst that it is destined to be. However, to get to this vision of LAX, we must first move forward with the SPAS planning process. We can no longer dither – the time to do it is now.

Sincerely,



William C. Allen

cc: Los Angeles City Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa
The Members of the Los Angeles City Council
Chief Executive Officer – LAWA, Gina Marie Lindsey
The Members of the Board of Airport Commissioners