



August 26, 1999

Terry Hiser, Congressional Aide
Congressman Elton Gallegly
300 Esplanade Drive, Suite 1800
Oxnard, CA 93030-1262

Dear Mrs. Hiser:

We have received your letter of August 18, 1999, in which you have requested information that may help you address the concerns of one of your constituents, Ms. Dineane Sperske. Ms. Sperske's inquiry covers several items, which I will briefly respond to with this letter and attachments. We had received a request from her for copies of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant application and two grant agreements, (copies enclosed) which we have already sent to her. As you may know, the current year's airport improvement program (AIP) has been extended on several occasions. As a result, the FAA elected to offer two grants to the county rather than one as originally planned. In reality these two grants are for the same project, which is to "Acquire Easement, (for) Runway 25 Runway Protection Zone (approx. 62 acres)."

On page 2, under "Conditions," paragraph 1. in the grant documents it describes the purpose as: \$ 0.00 for planning
\$136,336.00 for airport development or noise program implementation

This is standard wording in most FAA grants and, in the case of this project, the FAA considers easement acquisition as "airport development." The "Project" is described on page one of the grant.

As additional background, during the past four years, the Ventura County Department of Airports has been conducting a master plan study and associated environmental assessment/environment impact report (EA/EIR) for Oxnard Airport. Along with the master plan, the Department of Airports is conducting an FAA Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study. These studies were also funded by FAA AIP grants. One of the recommendations in the master plan was to acquire the land or an (avigation) easement over the property to the east of the Oxnard airport to protect the runway approach path and remove some obstructions. Most of this area involved the former (now closed) Oxnard High School site.

Within the past three years the City of Oxnard has expressed a strong interest in purchasing the former school site for a public safety center (police & fire) and open space. The Department of Airports concurred with the use of the property as proposed by the city. However, during this time, comments from the community indicated that it was the community's perception that the county planned to acquire the property for airport "expansion". Based on this information, when the FAA offered a grant for the acquisition of an "*aviation easement*" instead of "fee simple" land purchase, the county accepted the grant. There is no intention or need to acquire title to the land now, or in the future, *and it was never intended to be acquired for any physical expansion of the airport or runway.*

In addition, the studies have generated the concern that the county is going to "expand" the Oxnard airport into a "regional airline airport." Oxnard is a general aviation airport with limited commuter air service, and none of the studies recommend anything different in the future (20 year planning period). However, described in the studies is the national trend of commuter airlines moving from turbo-prop aircraft towards "regional jets" (RJ's). These aircraft are very similar in size (37 to 50 seats) and weight and are as quiet, or even quieter, than the turbo-prop aircraft currently using the airport. The term "regional jet" is what Ms. Sperske and others have interpreted to mean that Oxnard was expanding into a regional airport. Even with our best efforts, we have been unable to convince this small group of homeowners that the county is not proposing to make Oxnard the "regional airport" for Ventura County

As you may remember, the County has supported joint-use at NAWS Point Mugu. This has always been envisioned as the only possibility for a "regional airport" within Ventura County. One of the recent requests from the City of Oxnard is that the Board of Supervisors supports joint-use at Point Mugu and that the commuter airlines move over to Point Mugu if and when it becomes available. This would reaffirm the county's position and was recommended to help confirm that Oxnard Airport would not become a "regional airport." The Department of Airports staff and the Oxnard Airport Authority support this concept, which will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for its consideration in September 1999.

The "joint powers agreement" (JPA) mentioned in Ms. Sperske's letter refers to a 1980 agreement (enclosed) between the City of Oxnard and the County of Ventura. There is some confusion with the homeowners as to what is included in that agreement. There were two exhibits, one of which referred to a weight and type of aircraft (props only, no jets) that the airlines could fly, and other restrictions some thought were part of the JPA. However, it has been determined by our County Counsel and the City of Oxnard's City Attorney's Office, that those two exhibits were not included as part of the JPA and were never approved as part of the JPA by the City of Oxnard or Board of Supervisors. Also, as you may be aware, the FAA does not allow airport operators to discriminate against different types of aircraft using an airport. Unfortunately, someone has convinced Ms. Sperske and others that the restrictions in the two exhibits are valid. Even with that in mind, the size and weight of aircraft forecasted to use the Oxnard airport are similar to those that have used it in the past. We have tried to explain to Ms. Sperske and others

Terry Hiser
August 26, 1999
Page 3

that the character of the airport will not change in the foreseeable future and that we are not in violation of the JPA.

I hope this information will help you address Ms. Sperske's letter and concerns. Should you have any other questions or comments, please contact me at (805) 388-4200.

Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF AIRPORTS



RODNEY L. MURPHY, CAE
Director of Airports

ss/slcl/msw/sts/Gallegly letter 8 26 99
c: M. L. "Lin" Koester, CAO