



Washington State Senate

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To the Port of Seattle Commissioners:

I'd like to start by thanking each of you for your responsiveness thus far and look forward to the continued work on this issue and others which concern the constituents of the 33rd Legislative District.

Today I am here to report to you the increasing level of anxiety and unhappiness that my constituents are feeling regarding activities and operations at the Sea-Tac International Airport.

For the past two years, as various runways have been shut down and repaired, air traffic noise has also shifted, and hundreds of homeowners from Federal Way to Burien have expressed their grievances to me, as I imagine they have also done to you. Recently the Burien City Council had more than 100 residents attend a meeting to discuss these changes in airport noise. Federal Way had a public meeting two years ago with some 200 residents.

Many of these noise complaints are not only from the shifting patterns of air operations, but from the extension of operational hours. While past practices prohibited regular operations in the middle of the night and very early morning hours, that has apparently been abandoned as the press of more flights have encroached into virtually every hour of every day.

With continued record-breaking passenger demand for Sea-Tac, it seems we are on a collision course with the Sea-Tac Airport's plan to grow air cargo services. There are only so many acres on this property, and just so many minutes in the day. Demand will surpass both space and time availability. So what happens next?

Just last month, Russia's AirBridge Cargo was the latest new freighter service with flights to and from Moscow to begin operations. This is in addition to the other cargo carriers, ABX, DHL and Lufthansa Cargo now using Sea-Tac facilities. The cargo flight growth has been noticed by my constituents due to these planes flying at all hours, and are generally much louder than passenger jets.

Last month, I joined Sen. Judy Warnick and several other law and policy makers, including Commissioner John Creighton, in opening the discussion of possible alternatives for air freight

operations. We are considering policy options to broaden the aviation capacity of our state to embrace underutilized facilities. It was a robust conversation, and I look forward to pursuing the issue further.

Finally, I must note that the Port's plan to cut down thousands of local trees has drawn the consternation and outright alarm of many of my communities and constituents. Trees help our local environment's air quality—while airport operations degrade our local air quality. Trees help buffer our neighborhoods from noise, *while* expanding airport operations increases noise events to a near constant level. Trees help filter rain and improve water runoff. Simply removing thousands of trees degrades our local environment and replacing thousands of mature trees with small saplings is not sufficient mitigation in my view.

I understand that our State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) allows public agencies to make a determination of non-significance and avoid a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This segmenting of projects into phases makes it possible to bypass analysis of the project as a whole and as a consequence avoids discussion concerning the cumulative impact on surrounding communities.

So to that end, I commend the Commissioners for their work with and responsiveness to our communities by amending the current proposal to reduce the number of trees to be cleared and urge you to keep this dialogue open.

Our common goal is to find solutions and achieve agreements, whether with local communities, or with other ports, to provide a healthy, vibrant and growing passenger and cargo aviation in our state.

Thank you,

Sen. Karen Keiser