



421 Aviation Way  
Frederick, Maryland 21701

T. 301-695-2000  
F. 301-695-2375

[www.aopa.org](http://www.aopa.org)

October 1, 2009

Ms. Liese Olukoya, Field Consultant  
School Facilities Planning Division  
California Department of Education  
1430 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

Dear Ms. Olukoya:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of 415,000 members, more than two-thirds of the nation's pilots – including 49,392 of our members in the state of California. On behalf of our membership, AOPA is committed to ensuring the future viability and development of general aviation airports and their facilities as part of a national transportation system.

We understand that a proposed charter public high school will be located within 2 miles of the San Carlos Municipal Airport and that under Section 17215 of the Education Code your office requested a review of the proposed site by the California Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics. They completed that review and although they raised some significant concerns about noise from aircraft overflights and a low risk of an accident occurring at the proposed site, they did not object to the use of that site for a school.

AOPA is concerned that allowing the charter school to operate in that location will be a poor execution of both federal and state policies designed to protect airports and communities from development incompatible with aviation needs. Such development will inevitably be a source of irritation to students, teachers and airport users alike. San Carlos Municipal Airport is a vibrant general aviation airport that provides critical services to the community; and therefore, should not be put in a position to have an adverse relationship with its neighbors.

AOPA supported the legislation requiring review of proposed public schools within 2 miles of airports and encouraged introduction of the legislation adding charter schools to the proposed school site review process. The intent of this legislation was to encourage an alternate site to be chosen, or at least considered, unless it is absolutely necessary to place a school on a site close to an airport.

Despite the Division of Aeronautics' lack of formal objection to this site, we believe that the concerns they raised indicate that the proposed location is not consistent with the guiding principles of the enabling statute on school sites. AOPA strongly recommends that the Department of Education look for another site that is mutually beneficial to all parties involved.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this issue.

Sincerely,

John L. Collins  
Manager  
Airport Policy

cc: Gary Cathey, Chief, Aeronautics Division, California Department of Transportation