



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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June 5, 2007

Mr. W. Edward (Ted) Blockley, Chair
Planning Commission of the City of Bakersfield
Planning Department
1715 Chester Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Re: Amendment to the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for the Bakersfield
Municipal Airport

Dear Mr. Blockley:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of 412,000 members, more than two-thirds of the nation's pilots – and including 50,573 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 are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed reduction in length of the Extended Approach/Departure Zone B-2 for Runway 34 at Bakersfield Municipal Airport and we do not concur with the staff recommendation of approval. After review of the staff report, we have the same concerns as already filed with the city of Bakersfield by the Kern County Planning Department, County of Kern Department of Airports and the California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics.

It is our belief that any reduction in the size of Zone B-2 further eliminates existing open space that would be available and useful to a pilot of an aircraft in an emergency who needed a place to land off-airport. Incompatible land-use is not in the best interests of protecting the public safety. While existing low-density residential development closer to the airport has already reduced the available open space, this latest proposal will serve to only exacerbate negative impact on the airport since the proposed area is set for high-density development.

While noise exposure contours are a current acceptable method of determining impacts of aircraft noise, that noise does not magically decrease by drawing a line on a map. Normal aircraft operations may impact residents under the approach path of Runway 34 and departure path of Runway 16. With over 67 years of experience in airport advocacy, it is AOPA's experience that even when a resident is aware of the airport prior to taking up residency, they will complain about airport noise to their local government leaders.

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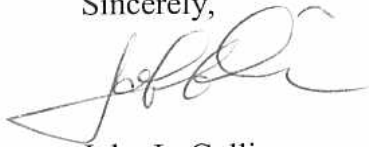
Eventually as the airport grows and prospers, more over-flights occur, as do complaints and demands for elected officials to “take care of the airport problem.”

The City of Bakersfield and Kern County are to be commended for having the foresight to protect the Bakersfield Municipal Airport when they established a larger than recommended Zone B-2. We fail to understand why city leaders would want to take a step backward and undue what clearly is in the best interest of local citizens and residents who live near the airport. We cannot change the prior mistakes made in allowing residential development in Zone B-2, but we must not perpetuate them by changing it now to allow high-density residential development.

If the City persists in changing Zone B-2 to Zone C, we respectfully request that the change in underlying City zoning not allow the maximum residential units per net acre and instead use the minimum number of residential units per net acre. AOPA strongly encourages the City to maintain the open space directly under the extended centerline of the runway. We also request that an avigation easement that is anchored to the property be put in place for each dwelling unit and that no future adverse access restrictions on the airport are put in place due to complaints from residents in this area. We highly recommend that applicable building codes implement as much noise reduction material as possible during the construction of any residential dwellings.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed change and for considering our views. If we can be of further assistance please contact our staff at 301-695-2200.

Sincerely,



John L. Collins
Senior Liaison
Airports

cc:

Mr. Brad Underwood, Supervisor, City of Bakersfield General Services Division
Ms. Lorelei H. Oviatt, Division Chief, Kern County Planning Department
Mr. Jack Gotcher, Director, County of Kern Department of Airports
Mr. Ron Bolyard, Airport Environmental Specialist, CA DOT Division of Aeronautics
Mr. Tony Garcia, Compliance Specialist, FAA Los Angeles Airports District Office
Mr. John Pfeifer, AOPA California Regional Representative
Mr. Richard H. Osborn, AOPA Airport Support Network Volunteer L45