



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Office of the Assistant Administrator for Policy,
Planning and Environment

800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington DC, 20591

SEP 23 2009

Martin Rubin, Director
Concerned Residents Against Airport Pollution
P.O. Box 643033
Los Angeles, CA 90064

Dear Mr. Rubin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the concerns of some of the residents of Santa Monica, California regarding toxic exposures from jet emissions at Santa Monica Airport (SMO). You expressed desire for a buffer area between jet blast and communities and asked that we take this issue under review.

The Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) mission is to ensure the safe and efficient use of navigable airspace in the United States. The FAA establishes aviation procedures to ensure safe and efficient aircraft operations. We recognize SMO's challenging geographical location with housing built up almost to the runway's end. The FAA has proposed and offered to consider funding various safety enhancements over the past three years at SMO. Unfortunately, the City of Santa Monica has rejected all of our proposals thus far.

Air quality studies to determine environmental impacts of airports are not normally under the FAA's jurisdiction unless they are related to compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. This would typically be done when airport projects to expand or reconfigure capacity are undertaken. We are aware that the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) conducted a study of the air quality impacts of SMO. Dr. Philip Fine presented results to the SCAQMD Aircraft Emissions Control Technology forum on February 13, 2008. For further information on this study, Dr. Fine may be contacted at (909) 396-2239. We are also aware that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is conducting a study on lead emissions from piston engine aircraft at SMO. Additional information about this study may be obtained by contacting, Dr. Matthew Lakin, with EPA Region 9, at (415) 972-3851.

While we understand your concerns regarding potential health risks because of jet fumes, the FAA only has authority to direct aircraft flight paths as necessary to ensure the safe and efficient use of navigable airspace. The City of Santa Monica, the EPA or the local or regional air quality regulatory authorities would need to pursue any additional studies regarding potential health and environmental impacts to the community near SMO from aircraft operations. We would be glad to cooperate with such efforts.

I hope that this information will help to clarify the authority and responsibility of the FAA in regards to aircraft operations at SMO. If you have any questions about this matter or need more information, please contact Dr. Lourdes Maurice, the FAA Director (Acting) of Environment and Energy, at (202) 267-3576.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy LoBue', written in a cursive style.

Nancy LoBue

Acting Assistant Administrator for Policy, Planning,
and Environment