



King County

Reagan Dunn

Councilmember, District 9

Metropolitan King County Council

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Chair Marko Liias
Senate Transportation Committee
305 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40466
Olympia, WA 98504

Ranking Member Curtis King
Senate Transportation Committee
414 Legislative Building
PO Box 40466
Olympia, WA 98504

Vice Chair John Lovick
Senate Transportation Committee
226 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40466
Olympia, WA 98504

Assistant Ranking Member Jeff Holy
Senate Transportation Committee
113 Legislative Modular Building
PO Box 40466
Olympia, WA 98504

Vice Chair Sharon Shewmake
Senate Transportation Committee
213 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40466
Olympia, WA 98504

Senators,

I am writing in opposition to House Bill 1791, which would establish the Commercial Aviation Coordinating Work Group (CACWG) as a replacement for the Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission (CACC). The CACWG would examine airport capacity in Washington state, including looking at potential sites for a new airport. I am very concerned about the ramifications this bill holds for my constituency in Enumclaw and other surrounding cities and unincorporated areas.

The original airport commission, CACC, was formed by this legislature to examine the needs and solutions for air travel in this state. The legislature instructed the CACC not to consider King County, including the Enumclaw Plateau area, as a potential site for a new airport, due to the lack of available land space and the existence of two major airports and many smaller regional facilities within the county. With the creation of the CACWG, however, the door would open to the siting of new airports within King County.

The CACC under the direction of the legislature did not review King County for a new airport, but WSDOT – under the Washington Aviation System Plan (WASP) – did do an analysis of King County sites. When exploring potential locations in King County, WASP reviewed the

Enumclaw Plateau as a potential location and found it to be unsuitable. I am concerned that CACWG would allow the Enumclaw Plateau to be pursued as a host for a new airport, despite the fact that both the WASP and CACC saw the site as unsuitable for a new airport. There are several reasons why the Enumclaw Plateau was rightfully excluded from consideration by the CACC, and these reasons should not be ignored nor reconsidered.

Specifically, the Enumclaw Plateau presents several barriers to airport functionality that warrant it being removed from consideration. Most notably, the Plateau's outsized ecological importance to the region should preclude it from consideration. The proposed site resides on land that is a part of the King County Farmland Preservation Program. The siting of an airport would damage land specifically set aside for preservation. It would also undo the millions spent on preserving the region's salmon habitat, as it would outright destroy the watershed. This is all not to mention the siting would separate the Muckleshoot Tribe from the Tomanamus Forest, an ancestral hunting and gathering ground for the tribe.

In addition, the Enumclaw Plateau lacks the transportation infrastructure to handle the thousands of projected passengers who would be traveling to and from an airport. The main roadways, State Routes 410, 164, and 169, already present capacity issues and are frequently congested. Another important factor to consider is that the Federal Aviation Administration has determined that the airspace at the Enumclaw Plateau is far too restrictive to support a large airport, finding it to be an infeasible location.

While the CACWG as currently proposed would explicitly exclude existing King County airports from potentially being expanded, I would reiterate concerns that the expansion of King County Airport or the Seatac International Airport would be difficult due to the already near capacity infrastructure throughout the county. Additionally, even with all airports running at maximum efficiency, that is no guarantee the aviation issue would be resolved.

For these above reasons, I am in opposition to the CACWG Legislation (HB 1791) and request that you revise HB 1791 to remove the Plateau and King County from CACWG's consideration of potential airport locations and to trust the findings of previous commissions created by this legislature.

Sincerely,



Reagan Dunn
Vice Chairman
King County Council

Cc: Senate Transportation Committee