May 5, 2010

Mr. Barry Cooper
Regional Administrator, Great Lakes Region
Federal Aviation Administration
O'Hare Lake Office Center
2300 East Devon Avenue
Des Plaines, IL 60018

Dear Mr. Cooper:

I write to inform you of the outcome of a town hall meeting my congressional campaign held in Park Ridge on April 29, 2010 to air residents' concerns about expansion at O'Hare Airport, and to explore solutions to recurring problems.

Our meeting was especially timely, given the pending merger of United Airlines and Continental Airlines. The merger presents unique opportunities to create jobs. It also presents a chance to revisit long-standing concerns.

The overwhelming feeling among Park Ridge residents is that no one is listening to them--that politicians in Washington are passing the buck to federal agencies, who in turn are passing the buck to each other.

At the meeting, major problems that were highlighted included: continued noise disturbance caused by new flight paths; safety concerns about aircraft passing directly above school facilities; and air pollution from jet engines at low altitudes.

We also discussed new research on the subjects of congestion pricing and landing slot auctions, both of which may be of interest as ways to manage air traffic to minimize delays and mitigate negative impacts. (I have attached two relevant papers to this letter.)

Though residents are clearly frustrated with the lack of progress, our meeting was both positive and constructive. Residents understand the economic importance of O'Hare; they simply want their concerns to be addressed with urgency, and a greater voice in the planning process.

I would like to suggest the following steps, for the short, medium, and long term:

- **Short term: Re-routing air traffic away from schools and residential areas.** As an immediate measure, re-routing air traffic so that it passes over industrial areas or highways, instead of schools and residential streets, will have a major positive impact on the communities surrounding the airport. There is an additional concern that high school athletic fields are apparently considered "parks" instead of school facilities for aviation purposes. Re-classifying these areas and altering air traffic accordingly would help to alleviate concerns about safety.

- **Medium term: Considering congestion pricing and landing slot auctions.** These are solutions that have emerged from both government and academic research, and which have now entered the policy literature and public debate. They may provide ways of reducing negative impacts, and might even provide reasonable alternatives to airport expansion itself.

- **Long term: A supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process.** Residents have expressed concerns that the original EIS, as extensive as it was, did not anticipate all of the impacts which have subsequently been experienced. A new, supplemental EIS, in which residents could help guide research and analysis, would be a good opportunity to bring all of the stakeholders together in a renewed process that reconciles economic goals with local environmental priorities.

I look forward to your detailed response to the concerns and suggestions I have presented in this letter, and to a continued, productive relationship in the days ahead. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

cc: Ms. Catherine M. Lang, Associate Administrator of Airports, FAA