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

Great Lakes Region
2300 East Devon Avenue
Des Plaines, IL 60018

JUN - 1 2010

Dear

Thank you for your recent letter to Randolph Babbitt, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Administrator Babbitt asked me to respond on behalf of the agency. From your correspondence, it appears that noise from nighttime O'Hare Airport operations is of great concern to you.

O'Hare has seven runways that are all utilized at different times depending upon the prevailing wind conditions on the airfield, as well as runway availability due to maintenance or operational issues such as snow removal. On the average, roughly 2,500 operations (arrivals and departures) occur daily at O'Hare. Approximately 10 percent of those daily operations occur between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. On a monthly basis, the utilization of Runway 27R as a nighttime arrival runway ranges from 1 to 2 percent. Both the daily total operations and the percentage of nighttime arrivals on Runway 27R are below the values evaluated by the FAA in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The role of FAA, with regard to evaluating the City of Chicago's O'Hare Airport development proposal, was to assure that all applicable Federal requirements related to design, construction, and operation of the proposed facility were properly applied, and to assure that the environmental impacts of the proposed development were properly assessed, addressed and mitigated. We can assure you that no individual community was singled out or omitted during the planning and analysis phase of the OMP. The FAA completed a very broad comprehensive technical and environmental analysis of the City's proposal and conducted three public hearings at three separate locations in the vicinity of O'Hare during the EIS process. Two hundred citizens provided testimony during the three days of hearings and twelve mayors, 35 business leaders, and six other public officials gave comment on the EIS. In addition, the FAA received more than 3,500 comments during the EIS process, and responded to every one of those comments. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) provides multiple opportunities for comment and the FAA adhered to all procedural requirements as defined by NEPA.

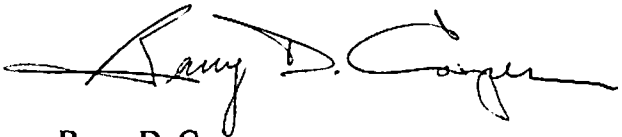
Regarding your comments concerning air quality, the EIS analyzed air quality impacts of the OMP. The EIS determined that the OMP meets applicable state and federal law regarding emissions and air pollution. The project was determined to be in compliance with Illinois State Implementation Plan (SIP) and the Federal Clean Air Act.

Regarding your reference to the O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission (ONCC), the FAA has no controlling interest or membership in, or jurisdiction over, the ONCC. The ONCC is an independent coalition of 27 municipalities, Cook County, and 15 School Districts that represent 40 communities surrounding O'Hare. Since your community is a member of the ONCC, your concerns or recommendations regarding ONCC are best directed to your elected officials.

The FAA shares your high regard for safety at our nation's airports. Please be assured that safety has never been compromised as a result of the OMP. Safety is the FAA's highest priority. The agency reviewed the design of City's proposal to ensure that it would properly protect the public safety while providing the most efficiency to the traveling public. Through its analysis of the OMP, the FAA took great care to examine health and safety concerns to ensure that all appropriate mitigation actions were taken. All runways included as a part of the City of Chicago's OMP were designed to meet and operate to FAA standards.

We appreciate the perspective you shared with us; and, it is my sincere hope that the information provided above addresses the concerns you raised.

Sincerely,



Barry D. Cooper
Regional Administrator
Great Lakes Region