

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 22, 2008

Robert A. Sturgell
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Mr. Sturgell:

We urge you to postpone any further implementation of the FAA's New York/New Jersey/Philadelphia (NY/NJ/PHL) Metropolitan Area Airspace Redesign Plan, specifically the selected project named the *Integrated Airspace Alternative with Integrated Control Complex*. There remains considerable controversy over this program, which the FAA began implementing on December 19, 2007. According to the FAA, the NY/NJ/PHL program is the first of several airspace redesigns to be initiated around the country that would employ a series of measures intended to reduce flight delays. We understand the need and desire to address the capacity constraints in this part of the country. However, the potential for serious unintended consequences appears to have been overlooked in the development of the *Integrated Airspace Alternative with Integrated Control Complex*. Significant concerns relating to noise, air quality, and other environmental impacts may not have been adequately addressed in the FAA's Airspace Redesign Environmental Impact Statement.

In order to have an independent assessment of these concerns Representative Rob Andrews, Representative Joe Sestak, and Aviation Subcommittee Chairman Jerry Costello, requested that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) undertake a study of the FAA's NY/NJ/PHL airspace redesign proposal, including key questions relating to cost, schedule estimates, and environmental impacts on local communities in the NY/NJ/PHL corridor. Senator's Joe Lieberman and Chris Dodd have also requested that the GAO include in its study important questions relating to the FAA's methodology for analyzing and mitigating projected increases in noise levels and other environmental impacts. The House even unanimously passed an amendment by Representatives Chris Shays, Scott Garrett and Rodney Frelinghuysen directing the GAO to conduct an inquiry into alternatives that meet the goal of addressing airspace congestion and flight delays without incurring the adverse impacts on lives on the ground.

The GAO study, which is expected to be completed in June 2008, is a measured review of an extremely complex and controversial proposal and the analyses behind it. For the first time, it will provide Congress with an independent assessment of several of the *Integrated Airspace Alternative with Integrated Control Complex* most contentious aspects. If the GAO finds significant flaws in this plan or the methodology used to develop it, Congress should have an opportunity to work with the FAA to address those concerns before its implementation is irreversible. If the FAA intends to use similar methodology to proceed with similar airspace

redesigns in other regions of the country, it is all the more important that Congress have an opportunity to thoroughly review this initial effort before it is too late to make adjustments. For these reasons we request that further implementation of the NY/NJ/PHL Metropolitan Area Airspace Redesign Plan, be postponed until we can review the GAO report. If, based on the GAO report, we must meet and develop an alternative plan, then let us do so while preserving the quality of life for our residents.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,


Robert E. Andrews
MEMBER OF CONGRESS


Joe Sestak
MEMBER OF CONGRESS


Scott Garrett
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

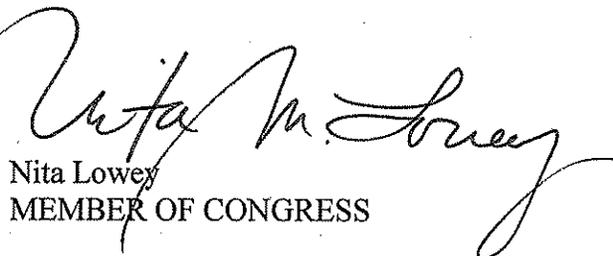

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