Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0529
HENRY A. WAXMAN
29TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

December 1995

Dear Friend:

In recent years, I have become increasingly concerned with the very heavy air traffic that has altered the safety and quality of life around the Santa Monica and Burbank airports.

In October, I lent my strong support to an effort by the Los Angeles City Council to trigger full-scale Congressional hearings on the status of air traffic problems throughout the entire Los Angeles metropolitan area.

I strongly support a 1000-foot height limit for helicopter traffic over residential areas. Such a rule would preserve peaceful residential neighborhoods without interfering with the helicopter traffic that we all know has proven so helpful in dealing with police emergencies, fires, floods, and disasters. Although the Federal Aviation Administration denied such a proposal in early October, their ruling has been appealed. I am working very hard to have this dangerous decision reversed.

Hundreds of communities across our nation balance the needs of residential communities with the necessity of operating nearby airports. Given the current advances in technology and flight skills, I believe we can cooperate with the Federal Aviation Administration to eliminate unnecessary and unsafe noise and air pollution.

For the past twenty years, I have argued that quiet, orderly neighborhoods can be compatible with airport traffic during reasonable hours. I will continue to oppose any measure that would compromise my commitment to these sound goals.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Waxman

HENRY A. WAXMAN
Member of Congress

EXCERPT OF SEPTEMBER 11, 1995 LETTER TO THE FAA

"I write to you out of a deep concern for the safety and reasonable peacefulness of residential neighborhoods. I in no way support any change in current rules which would interfere with emergency medical flights or the use of helicopters by law enforcement. What my community seeks is reasonable curbs on purely recreational or commercial use of helicopters at heights and times which are very disruptive."

Congressman Henry A. Waxman

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Santa Monica Airport Noise Troubles Neighbors

Although modest in size, the Santa Monica Airport continues to be a source of controversy in the community. This is hardly surprising, as it is among the busiest single-runway airports in America, and one of the few completely surrounded by otherwise quiet and peaceful residential communities.

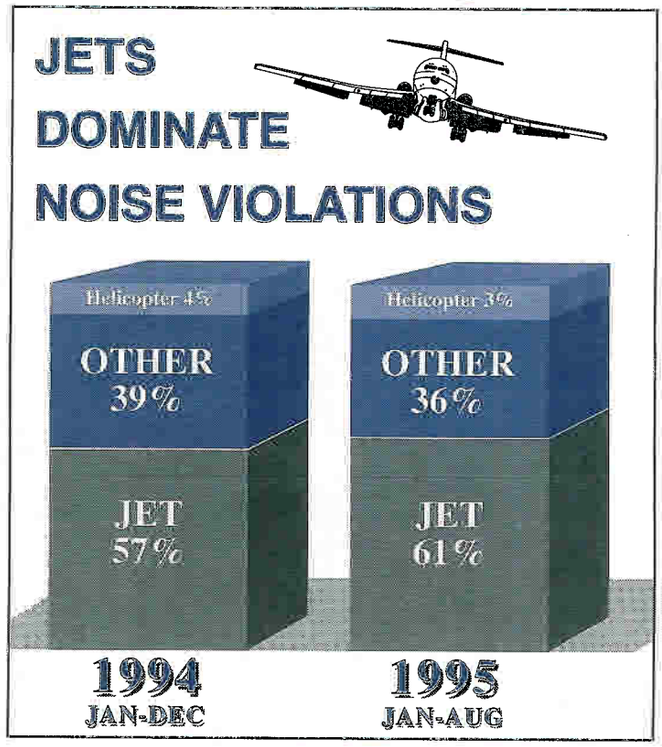
Only One Accident This Year

Safety is, of course, my primary concern. In this regard, 1995 has been a relatively good year. The only exception was the tragic — and I believe avoidable — crash in May of a homemade aircraft into a garage. This accident illustrates the need for additional regulations so that owners of experimental aircraft are no longer solely responsible for their own safety inspections. I will also continue to urge the FAA to implement additional safety measures, such as marking telephone and power lines so that they are easier for pilots to see.

Fear of Jets Grows

Recent statistics show that cooperation between the FAA, pilots, and the Santa Monica Airport Authority has helped hold down noise problems from helicopters and small aircraft. Noise violations by jets, however, have increased.

Like other smaller airports, the Santa Monica Airport has seen more and more jets using its facilities. We have been fortunate that there have been no accidents involving jets. Because of their size, noise, and power, I will continue to support every reasonable suggestion that would protect residents from these increasingly common aircraft.



Waxman Fights Burbank Airport Expansion

I have long been troubled by the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport. Like my colleague, Congressman Howard L. Berman, and groups such as the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association and the Studio City Residents Association, I have worked for a "Share the Noise" policy that would distribute the airport's noise more equitably — and more important, less disruptively — over surrounding neighborhoods.

When the Airport Commission proposed a four-fold expansion of the facility, I called for a comprehensive Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to study the certain negative effects on adjacent communities.

EIR Defies Community Opposition

In 1993 the EIR concluded that an increase in the airport's size would not increase noise. This assertion is absurd. The City of Los Angeles filed a legal challenge against the EIR. I also sent a letter opposing the report's conclusions.

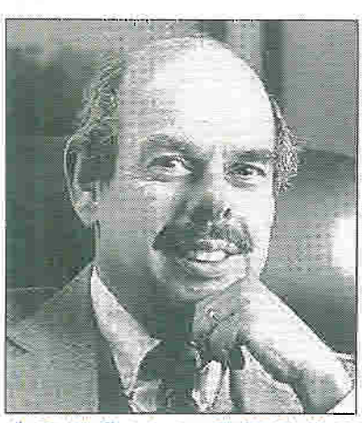
Airport Stalemate

Despite community opposition, the Airport Commission began trying to raise the nearly $350 million needed for the expansion. Its first bond measure was withdrawn after Burbank authorities were reluctant to approve it. The election in May of an anti-expansion majority to the Burbank City Council made passage of other airport expansion measures even less likely.

Expansion Endangers Entire Community

The future of the Burbank Airport expansion is still unresolved. Airport representatives insist that it is a necessary response to a growing need. Residents justifiably fear the costs will outweigh the benefits. I share their concern.

The Airport Commission should not approve the expansion if it is going to have a significantly adverse effect on quiet, attractive, and long-established communities.



SPECIAL REPORT ON AIRPORT NOISE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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