



South Metro Airport Action Council

Transmitted electronically
June 15, 2012

Representative Keith Ellison
1122 Longworth Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-2305

Dear Keith,

I want you to know that we agree with your position that the Federal Aviation Administration Modernization and Reform Act, signed into law in February was severely flawed. However, we asked you to contact FAA after the budget implementations to request a review of high rates, traffic control procedures and communications at MSP. This review is all the more needed *because of increased ground traffic and excessive overflight noise in your District.*

As we both leaned in the December 9, 2010 discussions with FAA representatives, flight procedures were changed in the aftermath of the near-mid-air collision near MSP in September 2010.

Follow-on Congressional contact with FAA regarding issues at MSP remains important to jobs, health and safety, and environmental protection. All of these are directly related to FAA programs and schedules at MSP. The five issues listed in our 23Jan2012 letter remain unresolved, not coordinated with the plans of airlines, the airport commission, the development and deployment of GPS-based en route control system changes, or Minnesota economic growth needs. We need an approach that deals with the separate issues as a unified problem at MSP.

The FAA Tower continues to strive for "efficiency" -- use of the runways at MSP at high rates and *minimum* separations -- in spite of budget limitations.

The airports commission has been preparing an Environmental Assessment for months, because the noise impacts are closely related, SMAAC believes, to the R30R departure changes. The EA was announced as comparing three options: No Action, Expansion without re-locating non-hub airlines, and Expansion re-locating non-hub airlines to the smaller terminal. None of these include the current operations and flight tracks as the baseline or the consequences if air service increases as projected.

The law mandated training, inspection, certification and audit programs for regional operators, and presumably has a budget priority at MSP, where over half of the flights are by regional operators. Has the necessary staff and budget been allocated for continued high rate ATC staff and equipment in addition to the staff time and money for the regional operator safety programs? Doubtful.

Thank you, and your staff, for your ongoing concern for neighborhoods, air travelers, aviation employees, and economic recovery.

Cordially,

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James R. Spensley

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