



Washington State  
Department of Transportation  
Paula J. Hammond, P.E.  
Secretary of Transportation

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April 22, 2009

Mr. Jason Paulsen  
Executive Director  
Methow Conservancy  
P.O. Box 71  
Winthrop, Washington 98862

Re: Methow Valley State Airport – Airport Layout Plan Update

Dear Mr. Paulsen:

Thank you for your letter dated April 13, 2009 and for the Methow Conservancy's interest in the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) process for this facility that is essential to the Methow Valley. We have recorded your comments for the project record.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Aviation Division has undertaken this planning process to meet the requirements of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The ALP is intended to plan for the future needs at the airport over the next 20 years. The plan will evaluate and address the conformance of the airport's existing facilities to FAA standards, which have been developed to ensure safe operations. Methow's ALP was last updated in 1995.

Initiated in March 2008, this planning process will result in an updated Methow ALP that will define the short-term and long-term needs through a comprehensive evaluation of airport conditions and FAA design standards. The ALP will provide specific guidance in making necessary improvements to maintain a safe and efficient airport that is economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable.

ALPs are developed through a lengthy process that generally takes over a year to complete. Much of the process that has taken place since the project began last March involved:

- A thorough inventory, review, and assessment of existing conditions relative to FAA design standards.
- The development of forecasts of based aircraft and operation levels.

In January and February 2009 preliminary alternatives began to take shape. The consultant and WSDOT spent a considerable amount of time researching property ownership, easements, and through the fence agreements to get a clear picture of future development and capacity needs on and off airport property.

Mr. Jason Paulsen  
April 20, 2009  
Page 2

The public process is an important part of this project. WSDOT formed a planning advisory committee (PAC), which has provided local review and input. Members of the PAC include:

- Dave Sandoz – Town of Winthrop Building Official
- Kurt Oakley – Winthrop Chamber of Commerce
- Charlene Beam – Okanogan County Office of Planning & Development
- John Button – North Cascades Smokejumper Base
- Jeff Wilkens – Wenatchee Valley Transportation Council (North Central RTPO)

During the inventory and review process, the PAC held meetings that were open to the public:

- March 25, 2008, 3:00 – 5:00 PM – Aero Methow Rescue training room.
- November 18, 2008, 3:00 – 5:00 PM - Aero Methow Rescue training room.

As you know, WSDOT held the latest meeting to present alternatives, which included a separate neighbor meeting, on March 19. Three development options were presented.

We want to clarify that WSDOT does not intend to expand the airport to accommodate larger aircraft operations. Our goal is to improve safety for the types of operations that the airport currently accommodates. *It should be noted that the preferred alternative may include portions of all three options, or could change significantly based on the input received through the public process.*

In response to requests from the community, WSDOT has extended the public comment period to April 30. However, even after that, the public will be able to give input. We will be hosting another public meeting on May 20 (location to be determined). At that May meeting we will again go over the ALP process, review the safety design conformance issues, go over the public comment that we have received, and present a refined alternative developed taking the public's input into consideration.

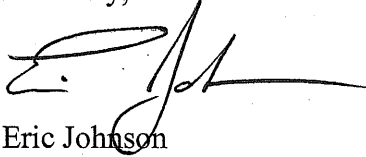
We continue to encourage your comments and input. We would be interested in meeting with you personally in the upcoming weeks, prior to the May 20 meeting. We look forward to further discussing your concerns and suggestions for additional alternatives, such as modifications to the grade of Evans Road to minimize impacts to agricultural lands and riparian habitat. I will contact your office next week to set up a time to meet.

WSDOT, the PAC, and consultant team appreciate all of the input that has been provided and will continue to work to identify a future path that will enhance safety and protect this public asset. More information on the planning process can be found on our Web site: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/News/2009/03/MethowALP.htm>. Please feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions or comments.

Mr. Jason Paulsen  
April 20, 2009  
Page 3

Thank you again for your interest and participation in the planning process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric Johnson  
Construction Project Manager

Cc Paula Hammond, Secretary of Transportation  
John Sibold, WSDOT Aviation Director  
Bud Hover, Okanogan County Commissioner  
Kaleen Cottingham, Washington State RCO  
Ron Judd, Office of the Governor