

Methow Conservancy



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November 14, 2012

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WSDOT Aviation Division
18204 59th Drive NE, Suite B
Arlington, WA 98223-8701

Char Alkire

Re: Methow Valley State Airport Rotating Beacon

Craig Boesel

Dear Mr. Wolf,

Jane Gilbertsen

Thank you for providing the opportunity for public comment regarding recent testing associated with the proposed rotating beacon at Methow Valley State Airport here in the Methow Valley.

Richard Hart

Methow Conservancy Staff were not able to observe the rotating beacon during the period of brief testing conducted last week. However, we have heard from members of the local full- and part-time community. They are either concerned with the potential adverse impacts that such a beacon would have in our valley if it is operated continually, or are concerned that they have not had an opportunity to inform their opinion regarding the beacon, because brief mid-week evening testing made it impossible for them to view it.

Scott Jennings

Over the past decade, the Methow Conservancy has conducted a variety of focus groups and neighborhood meetings where we've asked the community to help define what makes the Methow Valley unique and special in their minds. In almost every instance, appreciation is expressed for the opportunity to enjoy the stars under clear, dark skies – and a desire for future generations to have this same, increasingly unique, experience.

Gordon Reynaud

If WSDOT sincerely desires to benefit from the input of the local community, I would encourage you to schedule and conduct a test session where the beacon is left active long enough for the community to gain a sense for how it will impact individual property owners, as well as the community at-large.

Tom Doran

Additionally, I would encourage WSDOT to engage in discussions with the Federal Aviation Administration regarding options available for obtaining a variance from the requirement to install such a beacon as a condition of accepting federal funding for the other improvements you've made at Methow Valley State Airport. We know from WSDOT's previous plans for runway expansion to address FAA concerns at Evans Road, that the FAA can be practical and accommodating when WSDOT engages as an advocate with the communities within which it operates aviation facilities.

Beth & John Sinclair

Carrie Stokes

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Conservation Biologist
Julie Grialou

Monitoring & IT Coordinator
Dawn Woodruff

Conservation Project Manager
Jeanne White

Membership Assistant
Mary Morgan

Bookkeeper
Joy Schwab

It is this sort of practical approach that I am hopeful you will lead us toward so that our community benefits from safe and reliable infrastructure at our local airport for pilots, our Smoke Jumpers, and medical flight operations. These benefits can be achieved while still reflecting community values and preserving the unique opportunity we have here in the Methow Valley to enjoy dark skies and starry nights.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide public input. The Methow Valley community has a long history of working collaboratively to find solutions to problems, and I encourage you and your agency to partner with our community to bring a sensible resolution to this issue as well.

Sincerely,



Jason Paulsen
Executive Director
Methow Conservancy

Cc: Paula Hammond, Secretary of Transportation – Via Electronic Copy
Senator Linda Evans Parlette – Via Electronic Copy
Senator Maria Cantwell - – Via Electronic Copy
Senator Patty Murray – Via Electronic Copy
Representative Cary Condotta – Via Electronic Copy
Representative Mike Armstrong – Via Electronic Copy
Representative-elect Brad Hawkins – Via Electronic Copy
Don “Bud” Hover, Okanogan County Commission – Via Electronic Copy