

## **Reclaiming FAA for 'WE THE PEOPLE'**

This is clearly a captured federal agency, that serves industry and only industry. The People pay for it, not just with the aviation fees and taxes, but also with the environmental (and health) cost-shifting; the growing cases where industry profits are enhanced at the uncompensated expense of diminished local health and quality-of-life. Sadly, FAA not only enables further industry impacts, but FAA also provides 'cover' that insulates industry from balancing their desires against the problems those desires create.

So, what needs to change? What elements of reform are needed at FAA? Here's a partial list, suggesting the **REAL** amendments Congress needs to impose to bring FAA to heel:

1. **True & Meaningful Community Engagement:** not just checking boxes and enumerating how many people came to an Open House for a Master Plan, but **REAL** engagement, where citizen concerns are heard and valued, then used to generate better solutions, better designs, better procedures.
2. **Restored Local Control:** a truly engaged community has power to, among other things, manage their local airport in balance with the needs of the community. ANCA was passed by Congress in 1990, after heavy industry lobbying. Provisions within ANCA that deny local control are clearly problematic, and need to be repealed. Congress needs to Restore Local Control, to include:
  - a. **the right to impose hourly flow rate limits**, to reduce noise and air pollution;
  - b. **the right to impose curfew hours**, even a full curfew for at least the midnight to 5AM hours;
  - c. **the right to impose fees and taxes** (landing fees, time-of-day fees, a carbon tax or fuel tax, etc.), as a tool to discourage excessive airline scheduling and reduce impacts;
  - d. **the right to apply most or even all fee and tax revenues to fund non-aviation accounts**, such as parks, community programs, community health, mass transportation, or even generalized property tax relief; essentially, use the alleged aviation 'economic engine cash-cow' to benefit taxpayers and the community, not just the airport and airport users.
3. **Absolute Accountability:** people like David Suomi, Carmine Gallo, Caroline Poyurs, Elizabeth Ray, Michael Huerta, and Dan Elwell need to be held fully accountable. If/when they sign off on a scheme like 'Greener Skies' or a FONSI for Wake Recategorization at Boston or anywhere, their signature needs to have real weight. If the scheme or program proves to be empty greenwash or even fraudulent, heads should roll. The general public is not in the business of subsidizing failed programs, nor do we exist to enable unaccountable bureaucrats to feather their retirement nests.
4. **Full Transparency:** in a Democracy, nothing positive can happen so long as information is 'managed' in ways that impede a knowledgeable citizenry. Here is what we need:
  - a. **Prove the Greenwash (or stop it!):** In any report or public statement, where FAA or airport authorities are asserting claims such as reduced impacts, improved efficiencies, enhanced economic growth, etc., they should be required to prove

out the assertion. There are so many technical details it is nearly impossible for a regular citizen to do the critical analysis that proves an assertion. FAA (and others in industry) are the experts; therefore, THEY need to provide the critical analyses that enable citizens to reject or believe what they are being sold.

- b. **FOIA Compliance:** FAA has an ugly habit of FOIA non-compliance. Congress passed the FOIA laws, starting in the mid-1960s. Fifty years later, Congress needs to compel FAA to clean up their act and begin to fully comply with FOIA. One way would be to mandate certain key records and reports be automatically posted to a publicly accessible web portal, so people do not even need to use FOIA. Another way to force FOIA compliance would be to tell FAA they cannot legally use their 'pay-to-play' tactics to discourage the use of FOIA.
- c. **Mandatory public reporting:** the most valuable indicator we have to ensure adequate safety margins and optimized efficiency is the short QA/QC report FAA generates for all Go-Arounds and/or Missed Approaches. If report frequency increases, it indicates both safety and efficiency are reduced, which suggests the need for revised procedures, lower flow rates, etc. Every one of these reports needs to be publicly disclosed in a timely manner; at a minimum, it should be required that FAA complete each report within 3-days, conforming with minimum reporting standards, share a copy of each report with the airport authority within 3-days of completion, and ensure either FAA or the airport authority posts a copy at a web portal within seven days of the event, and to remain publicly viewable for at least two months. Also, these reports need to include all events for which an abnormal procedure is flown breaking away from the final 20-miles of the normal approach course (e.g., a 360-degree turn from the downwind leg or long final, or a 270-degree turn from the base leg).

We can have a federal agency that serves WE THE PEOPLE, not just industry. We can benefit from aviation, while also ensuring aviation does not diminish our lives. But, nothing can happen, nothing will happen, until Congress steps up to the plate and reclaims FAA. Now is the time.