



July 18, 2016

Sent via Email

Mr. Josh Fitzpatrick
FAA Airports District Office
6020 28th Avenue South, Room 102
Minneapolis, MN 55450-2706
Joshua.fitzpatrick@faa.gov

Re: Opposition to Proposed Crosswind Runway at the Mora Municipal Airport

Dear Sir:

On behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity, I am writing to express our opposition to the proposed crosswind runway at the Mora Municipal Airport in Mora, Minnesota. The Center is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with more than one million active members and supporters, with offices in Minneapolis and Duluth, and elsewhere across the country. The Center, on behalf of its over 12,000 Minnesota members, is concerned with conservation of imperiled wildlife and plants and with the effective implementation of federal and state conservation laws.

The location for the proposed runway is home to a vast diversity and abundance of wildlife, and we are very concerned that wildlife collisions with aircraft would be unavoidable if the project goes forward. In fact, we understand that any airport receiving federal grant-in-aid must keep new runway construction for piston aircraft 5000 feet from a wildlife hazard. As such, it is unacceptable to construct a runway on fields frequented by deer, geese and other wildlife and immediately adjacent to ponds used by birds and other animals.

Of particular concern is the fact that bald eagles regularly roost in trees that would be removed if the proposed runway project goes forward as planned. We understand that these eagles routinely hunt for fish in the pond located immediately adjacent to the proposed runway. Given that these birds are protected by numerous federal and state laws, we strongly urge you to reconsider the proposed airport expansion.

We are also concerned about the endangered butternut trees that would need to be destroyed for the runway construction. We disagree that the threat of disease justifies removal of these large and rare trees. To the contrary, the fact that these trees have thrived even though nearby trees are diseased indicates that they may be disease-resistant and therefore highly valuable from a genetic standpoint.

Only in a situation of great need should an airport be expanded in such an important natural area. Yet here, a paved airport in Hinckley, Minnesota is just 17 miles away. Moreover, the need for a crosswinds runway has not been justified based on the existing and project aircraft use of this airport.

Please add us to any email or mailing list for this project to keep us apprised of any future opportunities to participate in the planning process. If you have any questions about our opposition to this proposal, please do not hesitate to reach out to me by phone or email.

Sincerely,



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Senior Attorney
Center for Biological Diversity
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