

FAA reply: email from David.Suomi@faa.gov, 5:02 PM on 4/27/2017:

Good afternoon, **redacted**.

Thank you for taking the time yesterday and today to share your concerns relating to the potential consequences of aircraft noise¹ to you in the Des Moines community. The subject of your email relates your concern to impacts of expanding aviation capacity.

The FAA has a relatively limited role in expanding airport capacity.² Rather, the FAA manages the flow of air traffic to an airport facility as efficiently and safely as possible given the infrastructure available.³ The underlying demand for air service is the real driver of needs to increase capacity by the airport owner, in this case, the Port of Seattle.⁴ If the demand for air service any given airport approaches or exceed the practical capacity of the physical facility, be it runways, roadways, ramps or terminal facility, it is the airport owner that decides how best to accommodate the demands.⁵

The FAA does actively promote three strategies to manage aviation noise:

- Reduction of noise at its source, such as through quieter aircraft engines, aerodynamic improvements, **and/or operational procedural modifications**⁶
- Noise Compatibility Planning, which is a structured approach to enable airports, airlines and other user groups, the FAA, and neighboring communities to reduce the number of people exposed to significant noise⁷

¹ aiR footnote: emphasis added. Right out of the gate, Mr. Suomi is in denial. The citizen stated that “..noise from these commercial jets shake the walls and floor of my home.” Suomi calls that ‘potential consequences of aircraft noise’.

² aiR footnote: an incredible statement by Mr. Suomi. This is like saying, “*well, actually, drug dealers have a relatively limited role in drug addictions.*” Without FAA’s involvement, including the propaganda moves such as Mr. Suomi’s pro-expansion statements during the 4/25/2017 presentation that enable airport over-development, there would not be near as much expansion or impacts.

³ aiR footnote: If FAA *really* cared about efficiency and safety, they would insist on actually **MANAGING CAPACITY**. Sadly, though, FAA is so beholden to enabling airline hub over-expansion, the agency is ineffective and totally absent as a regulator.

⁴ aiR footnote: Mr. Suomi is misrepresenting the facts here. There has been no extraordinary increase in demand **FROM THE PEOPLE** for air service at Sea-Tac. Rather, it is the airlines who are suddenly adding lots more flights and hauling thousands more passengers THROUGH Sea-Tac, as a passenger sorting facility (aka, an airline hub). Why? Because the two dominant airlines at KSEA are presently in a sort of war; Delta chose to start up a new hub in 2012, and is aggressively adding routes, and this is forcing Alaska to compete, also stepping up flights. This is not to feed the Puget Sound economy, but to take advantage of the willingness of the Port of Seattle to bend over backwards, accommodating all those impactful through passengers.

⁵ aiR footnote: it is the airport authority’s decision, but with an enormous amount of oversight and guidance from FAA. And, let’s not forget: Mr. Suomi’s wife was Manager at FAA’s Seattle Airports District Office until June 2014, and now manages FAA’s 'Airport Safety and Standards Branch' in Renton.

⁶ aiR footnote: emphasis added to the last example. So, Mr. Suomi is saying, FAA can help to reduce noise by modifying operational procedures. This certainly would include modifying ATC operational procedures. This agency has the authority to say to the Sea-Tac operators, ‘no, we will not issue turns below 3,000-ft MSL altitude, as this generates too much noise impact. But, FAA instead writes Letters of Agreement that make the most impactful operational procedures ‘automatic’.

⁷ aiR footnote: If Mr. Suomi were to detail precisely what these programs are, very likely we would see FAA aiding local governments to change zoning and rules, that ultimately destroy formerly thriving residential neighborhoods.

- Federally funded noise mitigation programs, which primarily include property acquisition and sound insulation for eligible homes, schools, and other noise-sensitive facilities such as healthcare facilities and houses of worship⁸

When we develop NextGen procedures or other air traffic procedures, we try to route flights over water, industrial areas, or other non-residential areas as much as possible. However, as we get closer to the actual runway, we have fewer alternatives.⁹

Finally, a small clarification, I represent FAA's Northwest Mountain Region, not the Western Pacific Region.¹⁰

I hope this explains FAA's role related to your concerns. Thank you for expressing your concerns.

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⁸ aiR footnote: the problem with these noise mitigation programs is the resident gets insulation added, but has to live sealed inside their home ... even on fine summer days in the Northwest. And, if eligible to receive mitigation (based on a faulty 'DNL' noise metric, the residents have to sign away important property rights. Lastly, when the insulation fails with age, the resident is stuck spending money to solve the airport noise problem FAA has forced upon them. The net result: homes go to ruin, neighborhoods become destroyed over time.

⁹ aiR footnote: Mr. Suomi ends with the claim that ATC has 'fewer alternatives' closer to the runway. Well, this issue focuses only on North Flow departures being issued immediate 90° left turns to a 250 heading over Burien. This is one ADDITIONAL alternative being used by ATC, for the sole purpose of increasing runway throughput; i.e., the immediate turn by a Horizon Dash-8 enables Sea-Tac Tower to launch a jet departure immediately behind the Dash-8. Instead of waiting another half-minute or so, to keep everyone flying straight out, ATC chooses to impact residents west of the airport, with the low/loud early turns.

¹⁰ aiR footnote: Mr. Suomi has served recently as a temporary Regional Administrator in LA, for FAA's Western Pacific Region. But, presently, he is back in Renton. He goes where FAA wants him to go, as a loyal yes-man, serving the agency's mission: serving industry, not people.