



Economic Development Commission
City of Long Beach, California

April 24, 2007

The Honorable Mayor Bob Foster
and Members of the City Council
City of Long Beach
333 W. Ocean Blvd.
Long Beach, CA 90802

Re: The Long Beach Airport Terminal Improvement Project

Dear Mayor Foster and Members of the City Council:

Please accept this statement on behalf of the City of Long Beach Long Beach Economic Development Commission in support of the Long Beach Airport Terminal Improvement Project. The role of the Long Beach Economic Development Commission is to advise and make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on matters affecting economic development within the City. The Economic Development Commission unanimously recommends timely and immediate action to approve the staff recommendation to modernize and expand the airport terminal to 89,000 square feet.

The Commission rejects the false 'business versus neighborhoods' dichotomy that is so often carelessly used to describe the public debate over the airport. Modernization of the airport terminal is not a zero-sum game in which the winner takes all. Rather, the Commission believes that what supports a thriving business climate, including creation and retention of jobs, in turn supports our local economy and our neighborhoods. When business is stifled, jobs disappear, lowering our tax base and our property values. This is a fundamental premise of the Commission's Jobs and Business Strategy, which was approved by this Council in December, 2005. The Airport, together with its surrounding businesses, is a key economic engine that supports our entire City and region. Continued Airport operations have substantial positive impact on the City's long-term business growth and workforce development. Support our Airport and surrounding businesses, and neighborhoods thrive.

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Given the profound economic impact of the Long Beach Airport, the Commission has studied the issue of airport terminal improvements for the past three years. Toward that end, the Commission has reviewed the proposed terminal expansion and modernization, and notes that the scope of the project was reduced from 97,000 square feet to 89,000 square feet in order to accommodate neighborhood interests. We note that this is only the latest in a series of accommodations, beginning with the limited scope of study for the EIR, continuing with the Council's certification of the EIR for improvements only up to the 97,000 square foot level, and finally directing the City staff to negotiate with appellants on the scope of improvements.

Appellants cite the possibility that approval of the Proposed Project may cause airlines or other interested parties to mount a legal challenge to the noise ordinance. Litigation over the noise ordinance is always a possibility regardless of any action that Council may take concerning the airport. The remote prospect of litigation challenging the noise ordinance for the purpose of obtaining more flights than those permitted under the noise ordinance does not justify a refusal to improve the airport facilities to accommodate flights currently permitted under the existing ordinance.

In summary, the Economic Development Commission encourages the application of sensible, citywide economic policies. The Long Beach Airport is a vital economic engine that benefits our entire city as a whole. Improvement and modernization of the Long Beach Airport is sorely needed and is long overdue. Sensible policies, such as modernizing and improving the Airport, the gateway to our great City, should not idle in the name of 'not-in-my-backyard' politics, especially when the proposed terminal improvements are reasonably tailored to address current and allowable passenger demand under the noise ordinance.

The Economic Development Commission respectfully urges the Mayor and City Council to assert their leadership on this critical issue by approving the proposed airport terminal modernization and expansion to 89,000 square feet, and moving forward with necessary airport improvements without further delay.

Sincerely,



Susan Rusnak, Vice Chair

City of Long Beach Economic Development Commission

cc: Gerald R. Miller, City Manager
Robert Swayze, Economic Development Bureau Manager