

On behalf of the citizens of the Borough of Swarthmore, I appreciate being able to participate with all of you here today.

In October 2006, I had the opportunity to host Maria Cino, the Deputy Secretary of Transportation with responsibility for the FAA, along with several other elected Federal, PA state and Delaware County officials. As we walked on some of the Borough's sidewalks, we discussed the impact of the issues involved with the proposed Philadelphia Airport Expansion and the Air Space Redesign.

We understand the significance and the importance of the positive impact of jobs, tax revenue, economic development and convenient access that the airport provides to the communities in Delaware County, the City of Philadelphia and the region.

We also understand the other side of the story that includes the negative impact on the quality of life in Swarthmore and all of Delaware County's communities impacted by the current proposal, with some of those communities being very significantly and negatively impacted. Some of these negative issues are the great concern for the public's safety with increased flights over densely populated areas of Delaware County and the ability to provide emergency services if a catastrophic event would occur, adverse environmental impact with increased air pollution and additional noise, and decreased property values with the direct impact on tax revenues.

All of these issues will have a tremendously unfavorable impact on the quality of life in Delaware County and make the Eastern part of Delaware County a less desirable place to live.

Secretary Cino told me that she was from a small town in upper New York State, and that she was able to relate to the impact of all of these issues on small communities. She also told me that her office wanted to work with all of us in Delaware County to resolve these issues.

I am aware of prior discussions on airport regionalization including issues involving control of the airport authority, jobs and tax revenue. I have reviewed PA House Bill 1182, and, in my initial review, it appears to be a worthwhile course of action to actively consider.

In the Philadelphia Inquirer this morning, it said that the FAA reported that total flights are expected to increase more than 60% in the next four years. We understand the need for the airport to expand, and, perhaps this growth could be favorable if the increased flights would continue to be over the Delaware River, and not over the densely populated areas of Delaware County.

I am hopeful that open and continued positive dialogue between all of the involved and interest parties will lead to a final result that will satisfactorily

address all of these key issues. It is crucial that all of the municipalities and elected officials in the communities impacted by these airport proposals continue to work together.

Since my involvement starting in the fall 2003, there are many people who have been actively involved with these issues. I want thank Andy Reilly of Delaware County Council, my former work colleague Ridley Park Mayor Hank Eberle, U.S. Representative Joe Sestak, PA Senator Ted Erickson, and PA State Representatives Bryan Lentz and Ron Raymond, all of whom have been very helpful in this entire process.

Thank-you for the opportunity to be here today.

Elric C. Gerner  
Mayor  
Borough of Swarthmore

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