

Fight for Airport Noise Audit Moves to County Board

This past September, the SASY Neighborhood Association wrote to County Executive Falk to request a continuous audit of noise control measures at the Dane County Regional Airport. The audit would provide an objective method for measuring the success of the noise control program. It would use existing staff and information so would have no cost, and supplement the current noise hotline (246-5841) which has become antiquated and infrequently used. With the audit, all flights over populated areas of the city would be tracked to determine if they complied with noise control measures and the reason for violations.

In her September 24th response, Falk rejected the internal audit and deferred noise control decisions to airport staff. Ironically, SASYNA had originally contacted Falk because airport staff have been historically unresponsive to the concerns and suggestions of surrounding neighborhoods. In response to Falk's decision, County Supervisor Hendrick officially requested that Falk add the continuous audit to the upcoming county budget. However, Falk again declined to support the neighborhood request and her proposed budget for 2005 did not include Hendrick's proposal.

The budget has now moved onto the county board of supervisors. SASYNA has contacted county supervisors to encourage adoption of Hendrick's amendment. In his October 19th letter to supervisors, SASYNA Chair Dan Melton notes: "Members of our neighborhood association, like all Dane County residents, appreciate the importance of a healthy, thriving airport to the continued health of the regional economy. However, we hope county residents would also be willing to acknowledge that those who live under the flight paths bear an unusual burden - a "cost," if you will. Air traffic noise continues to be a significant impediment to improving the quality of life in our neighborhood. This impact will increase as the airport continues to expand its facilities and there are calls for more flights to help maintain a thriving business climate in Dane County. With the many projects currently being undertaken to improve and expand airport services, we ask that staff time be set aside to conduct the proposed noise audit and help offset the impacts of increasing air traffic."

If you would like to weigh in on the need for the continuous audit of the noise control measures, contact County Executive Falk at 266-4114 or email: falk@co.dane.wi.us, and the county board chair Kevin Kesterson at 838-9518 or email: kesterson@co.dane.wi.us.

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