Abatement Has Failed

Wainscott
May 21, 2012

Dear David,

In airports around the country noise abatement has failed. Airports that have spent millions of dollars in taxpayer money, and after over four decades of noise abatement strategies are reporting noise problems worse than ever with the only relief in sight being for residents and municipal leaders to call for airport closure.

Public-use airports, heliports, and seaplane bases totaled 7,192 in 1969. In 2007 that number was reduced to 5,221. In 38 years, 1,971 airports, heliports, and seaplane bases were closed. The main reason cited was zoning and land-use issues. One such issue is airports located in residential neighborhoods, such as East Hampton Airport. This should make crystal clear that operation of public-use airports is a political issue. The people will continue to "throw the bums out" until the airport is closed or until a political leader takes action like Mayor Richard M. Daley, who unilaterally ordered the midnight bulldozing of the runways on Meig's Field. He was quoted, "To do this any other way would have been needlessly contentious."

Contrary to false statements about my intentions regarding East Hampton Airport, I don't want to see the airport closed. I am a pilot and am considering flying again someday. I believe decisive action needs to be taken now to reduce activities at the airport so it is not eventually

closed. Now is the time to save East Hampton Airport. Noise abatement is not the answer.

Our current administration (and Peter Wadsworth) need to study history, so history does not repeat itself in East Hampton. Human nature will excuse history by stating that things are different in East Hampton. This is not the case. The truth is, continuous expansion of use as we have seen in the past 5 to 10 years is not sustainable and threatens the very existence of the airport.

One needs to study Naples Municipal Airport. Under grant assurances Naples spent 3.4 million taxpayer dollars to exclude Stage 1 and Stage 2 jets under 7,500 pounds. Naples spent $3.2 million to lengthen the runway as a noise-abatement strategy. The airport still has voluntary curfews and noise abatement procedures; however, it is reported that the noise problem is worse than ever. In fact the Federal Aviation Administration still fails to enforce noise mitigation procedures. With $6.6 million spent on only two initiatives with no relief in sight, it is a wasteful use of taxpayer money. In East Hampton we are willing to take a few hundred thousand dollars from the F.A.A. so we can spend $3.4 million later to exclude Stage 1 and Stage 2 aircraft under grant assurances. This is foolishness.

One needs to study Santa Monica Airport. After decades of complaints from residents surrounding the airport it has one of the most stringent noise ordinances in the nation. Two anti-noise organizations recently formed a coalition. Even after enforcement with strict fines attached, noise abatement ordinances such as maximum noise level, night-departure curfew, and operational limitations on touch-and-go and low

approach on weekends, holidays, and within certain hours during the week, the problem is worse now than ever before. It has been reported that after the airport grant assurances expire and all leases expire in 2015, the city will close the airport. The city is now entertaining a competition for future use of the airport property. Even though the F.A.A. and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association have weighed in to oppose the closure, the proponents of the airport still believe the city will close the airport after 2015.

Will the same hold true for the future of East Hampton Airport? Noise abatement has clearly failed in other municipal airports. Only the reduction of activities at East Hampton Airport will save it from the same outcome we see at Naples and Santa Monica. Reduction of activities rolled back to 10 years ago is the answer. It also makes the money being spent by this current administration unnecessary.

FRANK DALENE
Co-founder
Quiet Skies Coalition