



July 17, 2024

The Honorable Stephanie E. Hulse
c/o Office of the County Counsel
County of Monterey
168 W. Alisal Street, 3rd Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

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Re: *Monterey Peninsula Airport District's Response to 2023-2024
Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Report – "Monterey Regional
Airport: Understanding Noise"*

Dear Judge Hulse:

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933, subsection (c), et seq., the Monterey Peninsula Airport District, which operates the Monterey Regional Airport (collectively referred to as "MPAD"), has reviewed the 2023-2024 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report ("Final Report") entitled "Monterey Regional Airport: Understanding Noise". The MPAD would like to thank the Grand Jury members for their effort and dedication in researching the issues and in preparing the annual report.

In preparing this response, information and input was obtained from various sources regarding each finding and recommendation, including several staff members, whose information and input is incorporated in the responses. In response to the Final Report released June 13 2024, the MPAD Board of Directors unanimously approved the following response in a public session of its duly noticed meeting held on July 17, 2024.

As mentioned by the Grand Jury, "MPAD does not have the authority to regulate what happens in the airspace, including flight paths. Those regulations are dictated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)...". In fact, the FAA has expressly preempted MPAD, and all airports throughout the United States, from regulating matters such as hours of operation, flight times and schedules, use of airspace, path of travel by airplanes, and aircraft noise.

Further, MPAD is funded in large measure by the FAA and, as such, MPAD must ensure that the Monterey Regional Airport remains open and accessible to aircraft 24 hours per day, seven days per week, including for commercial and private aircraft. In addition, MPAD is prohibited from closing the airport during overnight or early morning hours.

The Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990 ("ANCA"), and FAA reauthorization statutes, impose several limitations on local regulation of airports. Specifically, ANCA prohibits local noise regulations related to aircraft. However, airports are required to conduct studies to establish noise exposure maps pursuant to 14 C.F.R. Part 150. These maps are intended to survey average

noise levels in the communities surrounding airports to ensure that noise levels are below a certain threshold. In the case of the Monterey Regional Airport, the approved map demonstrates that the airport noise level is low enough for residential homes to be approved by the City of Monterey on Garden Road, just one block away from the airport. In addition, ANCA does not allow local regulation related to airport closures or flight procedures, unless those regulations were in existence prior passage of the ANCA in 1990. MPAD had no such regulations and, as such, it is now prohibited from enacting those types of restrictions.

FINDINGS

- F1. A summary of noise complaints is only available inside monthly board packets making it difficult for the public to find and review them, adding to community misunderstanding.

Response: Agree in part; Disagree in part.

The MPAD agrees that the noise complaints are placed in each Board agenda which is publicly available on MPAD's website for the public to access. MPAD disagrees that the current location of the noise complaints adds to the community misunderstanding related to aircraft noise. However, MPAD agrees that certain changes in the placement and listing of noise complaints may provide additional transparency beyond what the Airport is currently providing to the public.

- F2. MPAD's complaint response is not well understood by the community causing frustration.

Response: Agree.

MPAD agrees that its noise complaint and response procedure is not well understood by the community causing some frustration.

- F3. Although the MPAD has community relations committees, these committees do not effectively communicate, involve, or educate the public regarding air traffic noise resulting in community complaints and dissatisfaction.

Response: Agree in part; Disagree in part;

MPAD has various committees which comply with the Brown Act, regularly post agendas and are open to the public. The Air Carrier Service – Marketing – Community Relations Committee is tasked with reviewing of noise complaints and recommending policy for the Board to approve. The Air Carrier Service – Marketing – Community Relations Committee will review current practices and

will determine if policy modifications are warranted and, if so, such policy modifications will be proposed for consideration by the Board.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. MPAD create a more visible area on its website that shares public complaints and MPAD's response to them within 72-hours of receipt by October 31, 2024.

Response: Will be implemented, in part; Will not be implemented, in part.

MPAD will create a more visible area on its website that will share noise complaints on or before October 31, 2024. In most instances, MPAD staff will respond to noise complaints within 72 hours, but certain complaints may take additional time to adequately respond.

- R2. MPAD create a more prominent statement on its website explaining the parameters regarding a 24/7 airport specific to noise management by August 31, 2024.

Response: Will be implemented.

- R3. MPAD create and approve an internal written policy and procedure for responding to citizen noise complaints by August 31, 2024.

Response: Will be implemented.

- R4. MPAD develop a more proactive community outreach program regarding air traffic noise, construction updates, and other information impacting the community by October 31, 2024.

Response: Will be implemented.

MPAD intends to utilize an existing standing committee, the Air Carrier Service – Marketing – Community Relations Committee, for this purpose to provide additional transparency related to air traffic noise, construction updates and other areas of importance to the surrounding region.

- R5. MPAD develop a Citizens Committee to provide community input regarding operations and noise mitigation efforts by October 31, 2024.

Response: Will not be implemented.

MPAD intends to utilize an existing standing committee, the Air Carrier Service – Marketing – Community Relations Committee, for this purpose to provide additional transparency related to air traffic noise, construction updates and other areas of importance to the surrounding region. In the last few years, MPAD convened several citizen, community, and airport user forums to review potential

ideas and to receive community feedback regarding plans for a new terminal and future needs of the airport. MPAD anticipates hosting future workshops and forums to continue its outreach and to receive input from the community.

R6. MPAD increase its visibility on social media to convey information regarding the Airport District by October 31, 2024.

Response: Will be implemented.

MPAD is quite visible on social media. In addition, MPAD utilizes press releases, notices to the public and other communication vehicles to keep the public informed of recent events at the Airport. For example, MPAD regularly posts notices regarding known events, such as the Thunderbirds arrivals and departures during the annual air shows, as well as other events of which MPAD receives advanced notice. MPAD does not receive any notice of occasional or unscheduled events such as military aircraft fly-bys, etc. However, as with any public agency, MPAD recognizes that it can, and will, increase its efforts to be more visible on social media.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Mary Ann Leffel', written in dark ink.

Mary Ann Leffel, Chair
Monterey Peninsula Airport District