



Puyallup Tribe of Indians



October 19th, 2022

Chair David Fleckenstein
Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission

Re: Airport Site Selection Study – Pierce County Sites

Dear Chair Fleckenstein,

The Puyallup Tribe of Indians is writing in strong opposition to Pierce County East and Pierce County Central sites currently being examined as part of the Washington Aviation System Plan Airport Site Selection Study.


The Puyallup Tribe of Indians hold considerable land and watershed interests in both these areas. Just east of the “Pierce County Central” site the Puyallup Tribe is in possession of land along Benbow Lakes and Lake Kapowsin for fisheries, hunting, cultural, and traditional use. The “Pierce County East” site is just north of these properties. The development pressures and consequential urbanization on and around our reservation has forced the Tribe to purchase these properties to continue our traditional way of life. An airport of this size and scale would invite sprawl and development pressures inconsistent with Pierce County land use and would further press the Tribe to find traditional lands for hunting, gathering, and spiritual use elsewhere.

Both sites being considered are surrounded by vast environmental and natural resources. These resources are considerably important to the Tribe as they are a mainstay in how the Tribe maintains its traditional way of life. The Tribe currently incubates juvenile salmon in a tribal fishery operation out of Lake Kapowsin. Additionally, the same site is used for ceremonial hunting. The Puyallup River Watershed, which includes several tributaries like the Carbon are ESA listed waters will be severely affected by aircraft engine exhaust and emissions from any siting of such a facility. Furthermore, the attraction of development and infrastructure around these sites will be of great considerable impact to our waters. Currently, the Puyallup Watershed bears a disproportionate impact compared to other watersheds when it comes to pollutant and development related impacts.

Finally, the Tribe does not believe we have been properly consulted on the site selection process throughout this study. Tribes were only recently notified in late

August of this process while the Commission was actively looking to narrow the site selection list in September. The impacts associated with this project should have constituted a more broad engagement with Tribes and characterization of how projects would affect their lands and Treaty resources before any decisions were made to narrow prospective sites. We look forward in providing this analysis as the Commission further analyzes sites within our traditional usual and accustomed areas.

Sincerely,


Chairman Bill Sterud
Puyallup Tribe of Indians