

'Airport of the Future' will displace, destroy

My home is near the center of the Thurston County "greenfield," which is one of three sites selected by the Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission (CACC) for potential recommendation as the location for Washington's next commercial mega-airport.

Pro-airport legislators Sen. Karen Keiser, D-Des Moines, and Rep. Tom D, R-Moses Lake, have begun selling it as an environmentally friendly "Airport of the Future" to justify building it in an undeveloped rural area. Seattle news media have also portrayed our area as undeveloped by mainly showing images of it as a place of rustic farms with cute animals grazing in breezy fields.

Reality though is that the Thurston site is very much a developed area with interspersed, shrinking pockets of small farms and disappearing greenbelts. There may be an enduring rural identity here among some residents, but the U.S. Census Bureau estimates we have 26,216 people living in 10,195 housing units in neighborhoods entirely within or intersected by the site's boundary. As part of this area, my neighborhood of Sunwood Lakes alone has nearly 400 homes and 1,000 residents of diverse backgrounds.

Building an airport here would displace thousands of homeowners and renters and continue the destruction of natural environments. Can the pro-airport boosters explain how this erasure of people, homes, and nature fit their happy narrative of the so-called airport of the future? Stop the airport.

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