

## A Mega Airport in Thurston or Lewis County? WSDOT and Governor's Expansion Work Untruthful, Misleading

Once again, this is the case with the current effort to decide on a location recommendation for a new mega airport in the Puget Sound region. It is done very skillfully and intentionally through positive propaganda and the withholding of important balancing information.

What's missing? Respect for the surrounding community of a new mega airport, which is under approach and departure flight paths, as far as 10 miles beyond the airport, and bears the brunt of the negative impacts.

Scientific research at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SeaTac) proves that. WSDOT's aviation expansion work group decided to exclude these important research results from its public communications.

The same research proves the connection between aviation pollution and inequity around airports, inequity meaning poor health and poverty. The closer to the airport, the worse. Seattle and King County Health conducted this research at SeaTac (piggy-backing on earlier research by Tufts University at Los Angeles and Boston International Airports) and reported on it to WSDOT's aviation expansion work group. So, ignorance is not an excuse here. WSDOT continues to purposely exclude it from public communications.

Independently verified forecasts: The forecasts for passenger and cargo service needs are sourced from the aviation/transportation industry itself and the details are not disclosed, according to WSDOT. Yet, several billions with a "B" of public tax dollars would build a mega airport. Demand artificially created by the industry is likely to inflate the forecasts. And, they do not take climate cooling and public health into account.

Instead, WSDOT emphasizes:

- Sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) is coming soon: Not really. It is decades away and requires a major agricultural shift in production from food to biofuel feedstock; with it, greenhouse gas emissions are shifted away from flying to propagation and production, without net emission reduction.
- Electric flying brings the airport of the future: WSDOT's favorite topic. Maybe as leisure and "flying car" concept for the well-to-do, but the electricity has to come from somewhere. Range limits and heaviness of batteries make a broad commercial application unrealistic any time soon.

WSDOT is seeking feedback right now, online, presenting one-sided and misleading information. And if the intent had been to involve the

public in decisions about the future expansion of aviation, then it would have been asked in 2019 before WSDOT Aviation Division's work was legislatively mandated.

That legislation just seems to have flown under the radar.

Message to WSDOT and the governor: Use new technology and SAFs for existing commercial flying first, then let's talk about expansion again. Dissolve the current work efforts until the new technology can live up to its hype and promise. Then, future efforts have to be honest and balanced with public health, climate cooling and all transportation modes – rail, road and wing. Aviation and transportation has to collaborate with the public in good faith and the government has to represent people. We are not getting that as of yet.

Ursula Euler  
Thurston County

Nisqually Valley News  
Sep 21, 2022