

The Los Angeles Coalition

A COALITION FOR THE ECONOMY & JOBS IN LOS ANGELES



April 22, 2013

Honorable Herb Wesson
President, Los Angeles City Council
Members of the Los Angeles City Council
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Re: The Modernization of Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)

Dear Council President and Councilmembers:

As members of the Los Angeles Coalition for the Economy & Jobs (L.A. Coalition), we are writing to express our strong support for the recently approved Board of Airport Commissioners' (BOAC) recommendations that would make Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) a safer, more operationally efficient and passenger-friendly airport.

LAX is the second largest job generator within the region and a significant component in the tourism and business economy of Los Angeles and Southern California. After 20 years of debate, six safety studies and 49 straight months of a 10 percent and higher unemployment rate in the city, it's time to act and make LAX a first rate airport once again.

Most critically, we look to your leadership to reaffirm the recommendation that calls for the realignment of the north airfield (which was designed in 1956 to accommodate smaller, piston-engine aircraft) to allow LAX to more safely accommodate the airlines' growing fleet of larger size planes. These mostly international flights are vital to the region's economy. The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation found that one daily transoceanic flight for a year represents \$623 million annually to Southern California's economy and sustains more than 3,120 jobs.

Only by approving Los Angeles World Airports' (LAWA) staff and BOAC's plan will we have an airport that meets the growing demands and needs of Los Angeles in a 21st century global economy.

As you know, the L.A. Coalition is an independent and bipartisan alliance that brings together leaders from business, labor, academia and nonprofits to advance sound policies that help to responsibly grow the economy and create quality jobs throughout the region.

As a group, the L.A. Coalition's membership represents organizations that employ hundreds of thousands of workers throughout the region.

We are particularly focused on the quality and competitiveness of the region's major economic assets. Chief among those assets is LAX – as it remains one of the world's top hub airports, serving more than 60 million passengers per year, sustaining more than 400,000 jobs and contributing more than \$40 billion dollars annually to Southern California's economy. It is typically the first and last impression that travelers have of our city and region.

As you are aware, LAWA's staff and BOAC recently went through a lengthy, thoughtful and critical review process, which analyzed six safety studies and multiple scenarios to modernize LAX. Residents, businesses, labor organizations, public officials throughout Southern California and those workers whose jobs are sustained by the airport and its activities have all had the opportunity to provide their feedback.

We strongly believe that these recommendations are reasonable, commendable and would deliver much-needed improvements to LAX and urge you to endorse these recommendations and move them forward in a timely manner. Delays work against the best interests of the city, LAX, the traveling public and the economy of Los Angeles and Southern California.

We respectfully ask you to consider the following points:

First, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has put runway safety on its top 10 list of priorities since 1990. Airports, particularly major hubs like LAX, are busy places that can handle more than a hundred flights an hour, while thousands of fuel trucks, bag tugs, catering trucks and many other vehicles crisscross the air field. LAX's north airfield was certainly not planned to accommodate today's level of activities and the airlines growing fleet of Group VI aircraft, such as the Airbus A380 and Boeing 747-8.

Councilmember Bill Rosendahl, whose council district abuts LAX, has shown great leadership in pushing the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and LAWA officials to implement airfield safety measures at LAX, such as the installation of runway status lights and today's most technologically advanced ground radar system, in addition to his call for more air traffic controllers.

In spite of this progress, these layers of safety will not fully eliminate all risk because procedures and people fail. For the past 20 years six safety studies have all corroborated what the FAA, the NTSB, airport planners from around the nation and the Air Line Pilots Association have all stated – that a reconfiguration of the north airfield to include a new centerline taxiway between the parallel runways is the most effective mitigation measure to curb airfield incursions. We can no longer ignore and fail to act on this advice. The safety of LAX's passengers, planes, workers and crews must remain priority number one and it is

time that members of the L.A. community put their localized interests aside and support the full modernization of LAX, including the renovation of the North Airfield.

In 2010, J. Randolph Babbitt, the former Administrator of the FAA (whose mission is to provide the safest, most efficient aerospace system in the world) addressed LAX's need to move the north runway in a letter, stating that "the only complete solution for LAX's safety and efficiency needs must include airfield geometry designed to accommodate modern aircraft," and "a similar reconfiguration of the LAX south airfield in 2008 has eliminated the most serious runway incursions there and reduced all types of incursions by nearly 80 percent."

Additionally and importantly, a final decision to realign the north airfield will unlock a series of capital improvement projects totaling an additional \$8.5 billion - none of which will be paid for by taxpayers. These improvements will allow for the development of terminals 1, 2 and 3, including a new Terminal Zero and northerly extensions of the Tom Bradley International Terminal and the Midfield Satellite Concourse and north side development. These are critically needed projects for LAX to be a globally competitive airport and to optimize its benefits for the citizens and economy of L.A. and Southern California.

Secondly, we fully appreciate the strong leadership of Mayor Villaraigosa, the L.A. City Council and LAWA's Gina Marie Lindsey and her team on the current multi-billion dollar capital improvement program moving forward at LAX. Despite these ongoing improvements much more needs to be done as soon as possible to provide the millions of travelers and thousands of airport workers a more efficient, accessible, safe and appealing airport. Government will also benefit. In 2011, the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation showed that LAX was responsible for generating more than \$2.5 billion in local and state revenues for L.A. County and \$122 million in federal tax revenues.

We fully support BOAC's recommendations that would improve LAX's ground transportation system. More specifically, we support the building of new ground transportation facilities outside the Central Terminal area, which would include a consolidated rental car facility, an intermodal transportation facility and an automated people mover. These are critical improvements needed to allow the public to move between the new transportation facilities and passenger terminals, as well as to Metro's proposed rail station at the intersection of Century and Aviation Boulevards.

It is imperative that L.A. extend the Green Line to LAX in order to allow travelers and employees of the airport to connect much more quickly and easily to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's growing transportation network and other destinations. Public rail to LAX has been in discussion for more than 20 years and getting this done is long overdue. Mayor Villaraigosa's 30/10 plan would provide the funding.

A traveler to Los Angeles should be able to land at LAX, hop on a rail line and travel quickly to downtown Los Angeles, the Westside, the San Fernando Valley and even to Disneyland, Universal Studios and Long Beach – all without getting on the freeway. This would be an enormous benefit for the environment, for tourists and the city's goal of attracting bigger conventions.

L.A.'s history shows us that in key moments the region's public, business, labor and civic leaders have demonstrated a shared commitment to economic growth. They focused on growing the economy by investing in significant projects that attracted and connected a growing population, and fostered new industries like entertainment and aerospace. They built aqueducts that deliver our water, the freeway system, the nation's busiest port complex and one of the world's leading airports.

Today, more than ever, L.A.'s economic success will be closely linked to the airport our city's founders built. It has a daily impact on the region's 15 million residents, economy, workers and travelers. It provides access to jobs, the means by which goods are delivered and a gateway to the world's growing population of consumers.

Furthermore, LAX, more than any other regional airport, provides the traveling consumer what they want – a greater frequency of flights, direct non-stop routes and affordable air fares. The airlines remain competitive by adjusting their business practices accordingly. They consolidate flights and limit their routes and destinations to achieve better efficiency. The time has come for LAX to match this reality.

Our city's unemployment rate stands at 11.3 percent – well above the state and national average – and it has not dipped below 10 percent since November 2008. Therefore the importance of this issue cannot be overstated. The L.A. community needs to use this moment to demonstrate that we are recommitting our collective efforts to making tough decisions, such as a on-time modernization plan being presented to the city council now.

This issue will be pivotal to determining whether LAX will once again be a world class airport servicing a region that is able to be economically competitive in a 21st century economy.

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of the city and we look forward to your moving this process forward with all deliberate speed in order to meet the expectations and aspirations of LAX's customers and the people of the Los Angeles and Southern California region and travelers from around the world.

Respectfully,



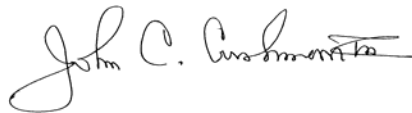
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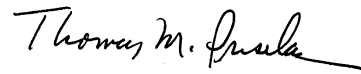
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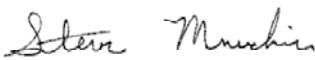
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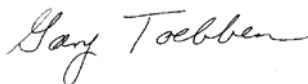
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The Los Angeles City Council – Supporting the Modernization of LAX

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cc: The Honorable Antonio Villaraigosa, Mayor of the City of Los Angeles

Gina Marie Lindsey, Executive Director, Los Angeles World Airports

Michael Lawson, Chair, Board of Los Angeles Airport Commissioners

Members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

The Honorable Janice Hahn, Congressmember for the 44th District - CA

The Honorable Maxine Waters, Congressmember for the 43rd District - CA

The Honorable Henry Waxman, Congressmember for the 33rd District - CA