

Final

The Honorable Richard G. Lugar
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Lugar:

Opening paragraph gives bottom line.

You wrote on September 27, concerned that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) was not considering the expansion plans of the Gary/Chicago Airport (GGY). You also asked us to change our Record of Decision for the proposed South Suburban Airport (SSA) to avoid any conflict with the plans for expansion at GGY. We appreciate hearing about your concerns. We recognize that GGY serves an important role within the Chicago region and will continue to work closely with the airport to help it meet its operational demands. The Record of Decision for SSA covered only approval of the SSA site, and will not affect projects at GGY.

Body is much tighter, no superfluous information.

As you noted, the FAA accepted GGY's 2001 Master Plan and approved its Airport Layout Plan (ALP). These detail expansion projects that "provide the needed capacity for steady or increased traffic" over the next 20 years. The projects include rehabilitating and extending the primary runway and constructing a new apron.

We have supported GGY's expansion plans to meet its operational needs. We awarded GGY \$4.4 million in grants in 2002 for security improvements and studied the feasibility of development at GGY beyond the 20-year planning period. We will respond to any proposals the airport submits, but we have not received any proposed revisions to the 2001 approved ALP. In our Record of Decision on SSA, we did not decide whether SSA was needed or how best to meet future aviation demand in the area. Our Record of Decision will not interfere with the expansion projects in GGY's Master Plan and its Airport Layout Plan, assuming reasonable forecasts consistent with the FAA's Terminal Area Forecasts justify them.

Closing adds important statement about bias and reiterates important point about continuing to work with the airport.

I assure you the FAA does not have a bias for the proposed SSA. We will continue working with GGY to help it meet its needs and the needs of the Greater Chicago area.

If I can be of further help, please contact me or Mr. David Balloff, Assistant Administrator for Government and Industry Affairs, at (202) 267-3277. We have sent identical letters to the cosigners of your letter.

Sincerely,

Marion C. Blakey
Administrator