

# IN BRIEF

## KIK Organizes Students

Maria Wardian, eighth-grade student at Sylvester Middle School, in the Highline School District, has started a no-third-runway group for students, "KIK" (short for "Kids Involving Kids"). The group's goal is to get "more kids informed about what the Port of Seattle is doing to us and our future", in terms of water pollution, air pollution, and impacts on schools.

Ms Wardian and fellow students recently attended a meeting of C.A.S.E., and came away incensed by video recordings of fish dying in Miller Creek (one of the area streams hard hit by pollution from Sea-Tac Airport). She points out that the same water that flows down the creek also finds its way into local drinking-water aquifers.

### Demonstration Planned

Maria is working via e-mail to bring together hundreds of kids later this winter for a demonstration "against the violence of the Port on our environment and health". She is looking for volunteers to act as representatives at every area school. Volunteers are also needed to hang posters, to make phone calls, and to spread the word, as well as telling their own stories on how the Port is affecting their own lives.

### How Sea-Tac Hurts Kids

Jet noise disrupts classrooms in many schools in the Highline School District, and also in South-East Seattle. The proposed third runway at Sea-Tac would bring flight corridors closer to several Highline schools. There would also be flights directly over elementary schools in South Park and Georgetown, and over Cleveland High School on Beacon Hill. Recent studies demonstrate that airport noise elevates blood pressure in children living near the airports.

Around big airports everywhere, health data show that more kids have asthma than kids who live in other areas. Two recent studies show that airport noise raises persistent blood pressure levels in children living near airport. Jet exhausts contain compounds that are known to cause cancer. Cancer takes a long time to develop, but every child living near a major airport—like Sea-Tac—is at risk for life-threatening cancer later in life.

Contact Maria by e-mail at [kiktherunway@hotmail.com](mailto:kiktherunway@hotmail.com) or by phone at 206.244.4888.

# Truth in Aviation

The Newsletter of the Regional Commission on Airport Affairs

Vol. 6, No. 3

Fall 2000

## Port Resubmits Permit, Demands Fast-tracking

As most readers know, on 28 September the Port of Seattle formally withdrew its second application to the Department of Ecology and to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for official approval to destroy wetlands west of the present Airport, and to relocate part of Miller Creek, for its third-runway project at Sea-Tac Airport.

Under the federal Clean Water Act, the Department of Ecology is charged with determining whether an applicant's plan to build in wetlands provides "reasonable assurance" that State water-quality criteria will not be violated. The Corps of Engineers then determines whether the harm to wetlands is "in the public interest" and otherwise in compliance with the Clean Water Act. Without approval from the two agencies, the Port cannot legally proceed with its third-runway construction work in the wetlands.

The best way to understand what has happened is to review the chronology.

**29 September 1999.** The Port submitted its second application to the Corps and Ecology, after having to withdraw its 1997 application because of gross under-statement of the amount of wetlands involved. Ecology had 365 days to pass on the application. The Engineers had previously announced that they would not decide till after Ecology had finished its work.

**Spring & Summer 2000.** Port of Seattle submitted voluminous revised documents, attempting to justify the plan, some as late as late August. Ecology, Engineers, and King County stormwater experts, as well as experts retained by Airport Communities Coalition, RCAA, and C.A.S.E., raised a host of questions, many of which remain unresolved (even in late November).

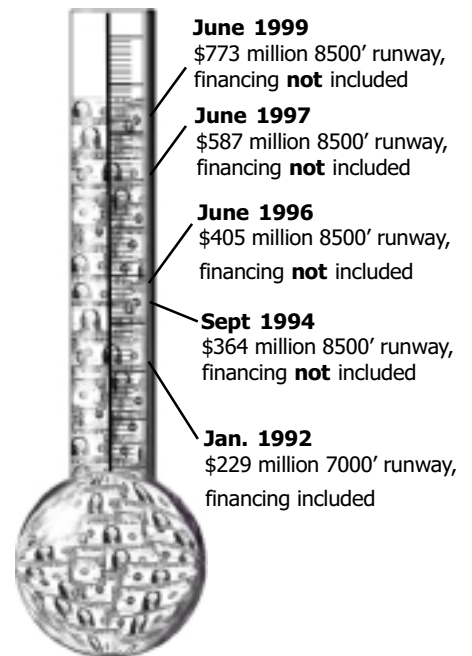
**28 September 2000.** A meeting—not publicly announced—was held at the office of M.R. ("Mic") Dinsmore, Executive Director of the Port of Seattle. Those present included: Joe Dear, the Governor's Chief of Staff; Mr Dinsmore; Tom Fitzsimmons, the head of the Department of Ecology; Ray Hellwig, head of the regional office of Ecology; and others. Mr Dinsmore was a major fund-raiser for Gov. Gary Locke in the last general election. The Governor and Ecology have denied that there is any political pressure in this affair, though Ecology has been officially warned that there is interest in this project "at the highest levels" of State government.

The Ecology folks brought with them their draft letter of decision on the sec. 401 application, dated that day, and shared it with the others. The letter flatly denied the application, because of multiple shortcomings. "At this time, Ecology does not have reasonable assurance the proposed project will comply with the applicable federal and state water quality requirements . . ." The letter referred questions to Ecology staffer Tom Luster. The letter acknowledged that the Port intended to resubmit, and pledged to "work with" the Port, and to "provide guidance to the applicant to help develop documents with the necessary level of detail and information for our review."

What else happened next at that meeting is not known.

However on that same day (28 September), the Port announced that it was withdrawing its applications under sec. 401 and sec. 404 of the federal Clean Water Act. In a letter dated that day

*Continued on page 2*



Late this summer, the Port of Seattle began publicly using the figure of \$5.6 billion for the Sea-Tac Expansion, without mentioning that the entire new Denver Airport cost their taxpayers around \$4.2 billion. See our editorial on page 5.

## DOE Dumps Veteran Analysts for New Team

In late October, the public learned that two veteran Ecology staffers had been removed from the Sea-Tac project, to be replaced by people having no prior experience with the numerous documents involved in the review process.

Tom Luster, one of the more outspoken critics of the project within the Department, was reassigned to "other projects", unidentified. Eric Stockdale, a senior wetlands specialist, was transferred to the review of "other proposals", unidentified. His work of wetlands review is to be taken over by a consultant paid by the Port. The Department denies that the consultant will report to the Port. Mr Stockdale had expressed an interest in moving to other assignments.

Although Ecology stated that the wetland mitigation plan is "nearly complete", it was felt necessary at this late date to move oversight of the project from the central office (Olympia) to the regional office at Bellevue "which is geographically closer to Sea-Tac Airport". The work will there will be overseen by a shorelands specialist.

The news of the removal of these knowledgeable from the project was carefully orchestrated by the Department's public-relations staff. "Talking points" were prepared to justify the moves to "opponent groups" and news media. Staff were instructed to make no comments, and to refer all questions to Curt Hart, Public Information Manager at the Bellevue office. Mr Hart had previously announced that the Port was "on the right track" in its 401 application. The change was announced to the Airport Communities Coalition on 23 October as "routine staffing changes". Mr Luster was advised of the change late on 23 October: there are indications that he was the last to know. As late as that day, he was actively involved in the project. Earlier in the month, he had expected to be involved after he returned on 5 November from a trip out of town.

Mr Hart's "talking points" claimed "No one is being punished as a result of any personnel changes."

It is widely understood that Mr Luster was the unnamed target of the recent newspaper columns by Norm Rice and Bob Wallace, attacking the Department for bureaucratic obstructionism in handling the Port's application. (See article on p. 3.) Port of Seattle spokesman Bob Parker told the *Highline Times* that the Port had nothing to do with the move.

Continued from page 1

## Port Fights for Wetlands Fast-track

to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Port wrote that it was withdrawing "solely for a technical reason, i.e., to grant Ecology additional time to complete its review". In fact, the Port withdrew because Ecology was poised to deny the application.

Also on 28 September, the Port issued a news release stating it would resubmit in two weeks and asserting that the new application would sail through to approval in a very few weeks, by December at the latest. Curt Hart, public-relations man at the Bellevue office of Ecology, said in a prepared statement that the Port was "on the right track, conceptually". Mr Fitzsimmons issued a letter dated that day to Mr Dinsmore, in response to the withdrawal, saying that there was not "adequate time to properly review ... remaining project related issues", but he was "confident" that Ecology would approve a renewed application. At the meeting in Mr Dinsmore's office, the tentative timetable was, a third application filed on 16 October, and a cut-off of public comment by 30 November, with a decision in mid-December.

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After the application was withdrawn, and while no new application was pending, there were "negotiations" under the chairmanship of a "facilitator" (Ms Kate Snyder) from the firm of Floyd & Snyder, Inc. Putting a "facilitator" in charge was one of the items discussed at the private 28 September meeting.

E-mail-traffic shows the following.

**2 October.** Meeting of Port, "facilitator", and Ecology, to negotiate.

**6 October.** Ditto

**10 October.** Ditto. Two persons present from King County, and six consultants, as well as Port and Ecology folks.

**13 October.** Another "negotiating" meeting.

**13 October.** Curt Hart, the PR man, e-mailed an East-Coast journalist that "we hope to have the permit issue resolved by mid-December", and that the Port would not be required to start over from scratch.

**20 October.** More "negotiating".

**24 October.** Technical stormwater plan status conference (limited attendance, excluding Ecology)

DATE Ecology's Ray Hellwig wrote to RCAA that there would be a new public notice and a new public hearing

**27 October.** All-day conference at Ecology's Bellevue office

**31 October.** Another all-day meeting at Ecology.

None of these eight meetings in October were announced publicly and no-one representing outside parties was present. The public would not know that they occurred but for persistent requests for disclosure of public records by ACC.

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**26 October.** The Port filed portions of a new application, announces the filing to the news media.

**During October.** The Corps of Engineers reviewed the submission for Ecology.

**3 November.** Ecology started to withhold documents sought by public disclosure on the grounds that they are deliberative documents.

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Present information is that a public hearing on the third application will be held in mid-January. RCAA and CASE are urging that this hearing be held in the Highline District and with adequate time for public comments. Check the Action Alert section of our website for the latest information on the hearing.

### Unresolved problems for the Port's wetlands OK

Here are some examples of the problems that the Port still has to resolve in order to meet the requirements of the Department of Ecology and of the Army Corps of Engineers, to earn the approvals needed for its destruction of wetlands and stream relocation.

- ❖ Water supply for augmentation of stream flow in local creeks
- ❖ Site for Auburn wetlands-mitigation area may already be wetlands
- ❖ Consequences of overflow from Industrial Wastewater System lagoon unknown
- ❖ Performance of the Industrial Wastewater System unknown
- ❖ Compliance with the Des Moines Creek Basin Plan
- ❖ Avoiding new pollution of Walker Creek basin from SR 509 interchange project. The Port says it has provided a new plan to the Engineers (but apparently not to Ecology)
- ❖ A new Natural Resources Mitigation Plan
- ❖ Ecology must decide whether it can let the 401 approval slide through on a hope that the next general pollution-control permit ('NPDES permit') will be sufficient to cover the problems of toxic de-icing compounds in local streams
- ❖ Impacts on Tyee Pond uncertain
- ❖ Problems of cumulative impacts at South end of Airport; new impermeable surfaces (10-acre parking lot) planned in violation of previous agreement, and fill in the SASA area
- ❖ Submittal of a stormwater management plan that meets King County requirements (was not do-able in two prior applications)
- ❖ Compliance with State water quality standards
- ❖ Completion of consultation with US Fish and Wildlife and the National Marine Fisheries Service concerning Endangered Species Act issues.

# Patterson, Keiser Sponsor Bill For State Study of Airport Sites

State Senator Julia Patterson (D., 33) and State Representative Karen Keiser (D., 33) have announced that in the upcoming 2001 session of the Legislature they will co-sponsor legislation to create a process for siting a second major regional airport in Washington.

Commenting on the Port's withdrawal of its requests for environmental approval of third-runway construction (see article on p. 1) Sen. Patterson said "Now is the time to move forward with a new solution — a new airport."

The legislation will create and fund an independent commission to study air-transportation needs and create a process to site a new international airport serving the entire state. At the November meeting of Seattle Council on Airport Affairs, Rep. Keiser described the bill as creating a commission to conduct a fast-track study, completing its work in 180 days. The Governor would then have 90 days to act on the report. "We don't want a report that will take two years and then sit on the shelf," she said.

Sen. Patterson noted that the Port's own projections show a need for a new airport in a few years—with or without a third runway at SeaTac. This is partly due to the fact that a third Sea-Tac runway will add NO capacity to the Airport, according to Port officials.

Patterson believes that many economically depressed areas would welcome the economic development that an international airport would

provide. Rep. Keiser commented, "I don't want to pre-suppose where it [a new airport] will go." Sites that have been discussed in the past (but not seriously examined) include Grant County International Airport (which has an excellent, existing 12,500-foot runway, and almost no bad weather); the Tenino area; sites north of Everett; McChord AFB; Paine Field; and various locations in South-West Washington. Portland-area groups, facing a capacity crunch at their airport, are now thinking about a site part-way between Seattle and Portland.

## Costs Require Different Site

In announcing her proposed bill, Sen. Patterson noted that the proposed third runway was now projected to cost over \$1 billion—"the most expensive runway ever to be built in the history of the nation." She added, "Because of the serious impacts on salmon and wetlands, there is no way that the Port of Seattle can justify the proposed third runway."

Rep. Keiser says that the Aviation Division of the state's Department of Transportation are completing a state-wide forecast study on aviation needs. She emphasizes the need to proceed quickly.

Both sponsors are working to build support among other legislators, and with interested groups around the State. RCAA's President, Larry Corvari, said, "We welcome this proposal. It dovetails with our long-term goals, and the needs of the State of Washington."

# Port Disclaims Responsibility for Contaminated Runway Fill

Charges and counter-charges continue to be swapped between the Port of Seattle and Airport Communities Coalition as to fill materials brought to Sea-Tac Airport from sites undergoing contamination clean-up.

We reported in our last issue that recent information showed that at least 80,000 cubic yards, possibly more, of contaminated fill material have been moved to Sea-Tac Airport. A front-page photograph showed an old rubber tire found in some of the "clean fill". More seriously, reports show that parts of the fill are contaminated with persistent bioaccumulative toxins, such as PCBs and DDT, at levels that could be an environmental problem. The fill may contain other toxins and metals. Toxin levels could be higher if the fill sent to Sea-Tac was from a "hot spot." The bulk of the suspect fill came from the Hamm Creek Restoration site in the Duwamish Valley run by the Army Corps of Engineers.

The Port of Seattle has responded in a long letter to the Department of Ecology. The Port could not explain the rubber tire, but did say un-

equivocally that the level of contamination was at levels "long accepted as soil constituent or chemical levels that are safe, without use restriction, for human exposure in residential settings, and that are fully protective of ground water ... used as drinking water".

Further, the Port was proud that the fill "was excavated from public properties being developed by public agencies for the public benefit ... the Port ... will continue to attempt to work with public agencies in this way ..." In other words, it is all right to accept fill that other agencies need to remove from contaminated sites.

As to materials from the work at the new First South (SR 509) bridge, the Port states that testing showed contamination in materials from part of that work site, and so no materials were accepted from that contaminated area. Fill from uncontaminated parts of the bridge site was allowed.

The Port concedes that the Hamm Creek material was so contaminated that it cannot legally

## Rice, Wallace Put on Political Pressure for Port

As the deadline approached for the Port's application to the Department of Ecology (see lead story on p.1), the Port put political pressure on Governor Gary Locke through public-relations work. First, former Seattle Mayor Norm Rice lent his name to an Op-Ed piece in the *Seattle Times* on 17 August, putting the blame for the Port's troubles on "bureaucratic bungling" on Ecology's part. Bellevue property developer (and former Seattle Chamber of Commerce president) Bob Wallace picked up the same theme in a column in the *Eastside Journal* a few days later. Mr Wallace claimed that the Port's "fully funded" project was being "stymied" by Ecology. Both Rice and Wallace called on the Governor to "remove the obstacles".

Mayor Rice's piece was actually written for him (at the suggestion of Chamber of Commerce officials) by Pacific Public Affairs, long-time public-relations firm for the Port of Seattle.

O. Carey Corr of the *Times* pointed out that the third runway is a huge project with obvious environmental consequences, and said that the public "needs rigorous enforcement of environmental laws".

For detailed rebuttals of the "Rice" and Wallace columns, see the "Letters to the Webmaster" section of our website.

## Port Consultant To Provide "Independent" Review

On October 10, the Port of Seattle and Washington State Department of Ecology agreed that the Port's proposed Natural Resources Mitigation Plan (part of its new wetland application) would receive "third party independent review" from Port consultants Herrera and Associates. An existing Port contract is to be amended to switch the consultant's status from Port expert to "independent" expert. Observers wonder how this maneuver will stand up in appeals to the Pollution Controls Hearing Board or the courts.

## RCAA Internet Services

RCAA's new website has citizen action alerts, press releases, links to news articles, and a large library of documents. Come visit at [www.rcaanews.org](http://www.rcaanews.org). To receive an Adobe Acrobat version of this newsletter delivered direct to your email, email us at [rcaa@accessone.com](mailto:rcaa@accessone.com).

## FAA Noise Policy Denounced

More than 700 comments have poured in to the FAA, in response to its issuance of a new noise-abatement policy in mid-July. Most of the comments from community groups and from cities criticized FAA's exclusive use of the 65 dB LDN noise metric to decide who is affected by overflight noise. Locally, the City of Medina, SCAA, and RCAA each submitted comments, with the 65 LDN metric as a key point.

The RCAA comments also called for FAA to attack overflight noise at the source – airports. FAA's major long-term plan is to phase in tougher standards for jet engines sometime in the far future. Too little, too late, says RCAA. RCAA supports development of new world-wide standards, but that is a very long-term remedy.

### Build Quieter, Cheaper Airports

Instead, the comment said, "The FAA's best noise-abatement policy would be... to curtail growth of noise at the source, at the airports, and to work vigorously to direct aviation growth to new, better, remote locations." Noise impacts from "green field" airports (on the model of the new Denver facility) would be minimal. Construction costs would be much less than the cost of trying to expand and rebuild facilities crammed into urban settings (like Sea-Tac Airport).

The text of the RCAA comments is posted on our website, [www.rcaanews.org](http://www.rcaanews.org), in the "Library" section, under the "Noise" heading.

*Continued on page 6*

## SCAA To Meet

President Mike G. Rees has announced that the Seattle Council on Airport Affairs will hold its annual general membership meeting, including election of its Board of Directors for 2001, on Thursday, 18 January 2001. SCAA meets at Jefferson Park Community Center, 3801 Beacon Ave. So., Seattle. The starting time is 7 p.m.

SCAA's officers are chosen by the newly-elected Directors, immediately following the membership meeting. Jamie Alls, the present Vice President, is heading up the group's nominating committee. SCAA members interested in serving on the Board should be in touch with Mr Alls.

No membership meeting is scheduled for December 2000.

For further information about the annual meeting, or SCAA generally, visit the website, [www.airportnoise.org](http://www.airportnoise.org), or leave a call on the message line, 206.763.SCAA. (206.763.7222)

## Port Smothers Part 150 Process

After many months of hard work by the advisory committee, Sea-Tac's current study of noise remedies is now before the Port Commission for final action. Port staff are advising the Commission to reject almost every major element of the study. A draft ordinance, adopting the staff's views, is scheduled for first reading and final passage by mid-December.

The committee's proposals for dispersing flights came before the Commission for action in June. Dispersion of flights departing southward over Des Moines, Federal Way, and points south was rejected completely. All but one part of the proposal for dispersing flights departing northward was also rejected. The one surviving possible change is to increase flights out the Elliott Bay noise-abatement corridor. That is in the hands of an unsympathetic FAA for study.

Staff's recommendations on the remaining proposals are as follows.

A Part 161 study reviewing flight procedures for noise abatement purposes—Reject.

Increase arrival glide slope—Reject.

'Jawbone' airlines to meet the slope much farther out—Accepted, with no consequences if the airlines don't agree.

Hush house (suggested in the 1989-90 noise-mediation process) to contain engine run-up noise—More study.

Noise barriers (berms)—Reject.

More restrictions on engine run-ups—Accept an increase in fines; accept prohibition between midnight and 6 a.m.

Ask FAA to require use of new technology to increase compliance with Elliott Bay noise-abatement corridors—Accept.

"The third runway adds no capacity, and therefore will create no new noise problems."

*Gina Marie Lindsay*

*Aviation Director, Sea-Tac Airport*

*To the Part 150 Committee, Summer 2000*

'Jawbone' airlines to restrict late-night use of Stage 2 aircraft weighing less than 75,000 pounds—Accept, but with no consequences if the airlines don't agree.

Voluntary 'Fly-quiet program'—Accept.

Expanded noise-remedy (insulation) program, to include another 1800 single-family homes—Reject.

Insulation of multi-family structures: the advisory committee recommended insulation for all within 65 DNL contour—the staff recommends insulation only for owner-occupied units within the 70 DNL contour.

Insulation of public buildings: the committee recommended insulation of many types of buildings within the 65 DNL contours: the staff supports only school insulation—but the Port has actually stone-walled such insulation for 25 years, so this is meaningless.

## Remedying Harm from Second Runway— A Preview of Third-Runway Problems?

While the Port of Seattle tries to solve problems that stand in the way of a building a third Sea-Tac runway, the community still struggles to cope with problems left over from the second runway, which opened for business in 1972. Is second-runway experience a guide to our future if there is a third runway?

Consider the noise-insulation-abatement program. The Port waited for years before starting a home-insulation program. Many homes had to be insulated twice. Insulation for multi-family homes is still incomplete, and there is no program for institutions (such as churches). The program is restricted to the computer-mapped 65 db LDN contours.

Consider the buy-out program. Airports use FAA grants to buy homes and other properties subject to very high noise levels. These programs let airports expand, in the guise of curing noise concerns, and thus are a mixed blessing to near-by communities. Many Sea-Tac neighbors are still hoping for decent offers from the Port, so they can recoup their savings tied up in their homes – and move on. But this program is stalled.

Consider the schools. Consider how little progress has been made in dealing with overflight noise in the classrooms of the Highline School District, or elsewhere. Supposedly, the Port and

the Highline District are negotiating under the auspices of the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) for a resolution of classroom noise problems. Resolution A-96-02 of the PSRC's General Assembly mandates the Port and other groups to deal with a long (but incomplete) list of unresolved Sea-Tac issues, including school noise. About once a year, these agencies file written reports on their progress with PSRC, and then hold a public meeting to discuss their reports. And how much progress has been made on the schools issue? RCAA's recent comment to PSRC says it all:

*Resolution A-96-02 was adopted on 11 July 1996. More than four years have passed, and to date not one building in the Highline School District has been the beneficiary of work funded by the Port to achieve an appropriately-reduced sound level. The Port's "progress report" is a report of unwillingness to face the problem as it is.*

A third runway would bring jet traffic over more schools, in Highline, in Seattle, in Federal Way. And thirty years later the schools would be still wondering if the Port would ever deal with the noise problem in their classrooms.

The full text of the RCAA comment on the reports to PSRC may be found at [www.rcaanews.org](http://www.rcaanews.org).

# RCAA Needs You! *Your contributions and participation are vital.*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ "No Third Runway" bumper strips. (*No contribution is required.*)

\_\_\_\_ I want to contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

## Editorial

# Project Creep, Environmental Mess at Sea-Tac Require a Fresh Look at Alternatives

How much is too much?

What is the right amount of money to spend on the third runway at Sea-Tac Airport? What is the right amount of money to spend on remodeling and new construction of the Airport to support that new runway?

These are questions that the Port Commissioners seem never to have asked their ambitious staff. We wonder if the Port Commissioners—or the staff—even know how much their dream project will cost.

Whatever the dollar cost, this is what they would get if their plans go through:

- A remodelled main concourse
- A new North terminal
- A new parking garage
- A new 'people mover'
- Various other 'fixes' to the infrastructure
- A third runway
- The smallest airport campus of any major airport in the country
  - Inadequate safety aprons.
  - A new runway that is too short for some of the biggest jet liners on take-offs
  - A new runway that only operates in poor weather
  - A new runway that is so close to the others that only two of the three runways can operate at the same time.
  - An airport that will not be able to handle projected air-travel demands by the year 2010
  - A greatly-increased risk of aircraft collisions on the ground ('incursions')
  - Several towering walls, overlooking Miller Creek, and subject to risk of failure when the next earthquake comes
  - Destruction of over 20 acres of wetlands



*"I'm one of the first ones to admit it's an expensive project," said Gina Marie Lindsey, managing director of the Port's aviation division. "But the cost is only relative when you contrast it to the other solutions to the problem, such as building a new airport for \$5 billion." —June, 1996*

→ Unacceptable damage to Miller and Walker Creeks, and to Des Moines Creek, and the wildlife that lives in & around those creeks

→ New flight corridors, and new noise, over Federal Way, Des Moines, parts of unincorporated King County, and Seattle—with a stingy noise mitigation plan

→ A huge long-term debt for money borrowed for construction

**Costs—Uncertain, But Huge**

What will all this cost? We wish we knew. But even the Port doesn't

know. Here are some figures from Port sources: \$1.4 billion, Technical Report 8 (for the 3rd runway EIS), December 1995 (many parts of the over-all project not included)

\$6 billion, Port Commissioner candidate Bob Edwards, campaign literature, fall 1999

\$7-10 billion, Port Commissioner Pat Davis to KUOW Radio in September 1999.

Notice that there have been no new official cost estimates in the last year, although Port press releases and news article have lately been quoting \$2.6 for the runway plus everything except the north terminal, \$3 billion for the north terminal, making a total of \$5.6 billion (*Seattle Times*, Sept. 3).

Note that these figures do not include the interest that the Port must pay on the huge debts that it is running up.

**The Alternative—Better, Safer, Cheaper**

The alternative is to build a new airport in a location that is not surrounded by urban build-up. There are several strong contenders, and they

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RCAA  
19900 4th Ave. S.W.  
Normandy Park, WA 98166-4043  
(206) 824-3120 FAX: (206) 824-3451

website: [www.rcaanews.org](http://www.rcaanews.org)

### Officers & Directors:

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Jane Rees SANG/ANG (Seattle)

**Office Administrator:** Chas Talbot

**Newsletter Editors:** Beth Means and Chas Talbot

all deserve a closer look, which is why we support Sen. Julia Patterson's proposal for a State-funded study to examine alternative sites.

A new site would be better because the successful site would not be in wetlands, would not impact endangered fish and bird species, and would not be in the middle of a metropolis. A new site would be better because the campus would be huge, so huge that even if houses were built next to the fence, they would still be far from the runways. And a new site would allow adequate access roads to be built—what a relief that would be! A new site would have room for multiple runways that could and would operate at full capacity. Without environmental problems, without the need for 27 million tons of fill, the new airport could be built much more quickly.

A new airport would be safer, because it would not have three parallel runways, the most dangerous of configurations, and because it would not have half a dozen other active airports just a whoop and a holler away.

A new airport would be cheaper. The airport we just described has been built, so we know what it cost. It's the new Denver airport. It has 5 independent runways. Its terminal and all its supporting infrastructure are brand new. It doesn't spew noise and air pollution on thousands of near-by residents—because there aren't any. The highest noise area is all within the 53,000 acre campus of the airport. And best of all, it only cost the taxpayers \$4.2 billion. Do the math: Choice 1, a brand-new airport that will meet the need into the far future, without serious environmental problems, \$4.2 billion to taxpayers. Choice 2, a recycled airport, loaded with environmental problems, and obsolete in a few years, \$5.6 billion? Which is the better choice?

Washington needs a new major airport. The taxpayers need a better deal. Let's get started. p5

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19900 4th Ave. S.W.  
Normandy Park, WA 98166-4043

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## Inside:

**Port Tries Third Time with Wetlands, p.1**  
**Airport Options at the Legislature, p.1**  
**Contaminated Fill Problem Big, p.3**  
**Port Smothers Part 150 Process, p.4**  
**Building in Swamps is Expensive, p.5**

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## RCAA Elections

In recent elections, RCAA President Larry Corvari was re-elected for a second one-year term. Also re-elected were Vice President Al Furney and Secretary-Treasurer Phil Emerson. Mr Corvari, a Normandy Park resident, is an executive with XyPoint. Mr Furney (Des Moines) is an engineer with a Seattle engineering firm. Mr Emerson, who resides in Burien, is a graduate student in education at the University of Washington.

Three incumbent Board members were re-elected for two-year terms: Dr Dennis Hansen, Jeanne Moeller, and Len Oebser. Mr Oebser served as RCAA's president in 1996-97.

### Seattle Group Affiliates with RCAA

Newly joining RCAA's Board is Frank Bosl, as representative of CANE, a Seattle-based group advocating for reduction in existing noise from Sea-Tac Airport. Mr Bosl resides in the Leschi neighborhood of Seattle, and works as a real-estate professional with a major nationwide agency. CANE affiliated with RCAA in October, bringing the total number of RCAA affiliates to four. Mr. Bosl also serves as CANE's representative on the Board of the Seattle Council on Airport Affairs.

*Continued from page 3*     **Contaminated Fill**  
be dumped in marine waters, but says that the regulations do permit it to be used as fill above drinking-water aquifers, and in the headwaters of freshwater streams.

The Department of Ecology and the Port maintain that as long as the new contamination is not so great as to require a clean-up under the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), it is quite all right. Ecology is rewriting its rules to make it clear that the "clean-up-under- MTCA" test is not the standard to be used for runway fill.

Airport Communities Coalition consultant Greg Wingard says that bringing contaminated fill to a clean site violates the anti-degradation principle of State law which forbids making a situation worse.

There are at least 15-20 sites from which the Port is now taking materials, of which 8 to 10 are contaminated. Although Port staff are sampling all incoming materials, Wingard says that their sampling method is scientifically indefensible. Many more samples need to be taken, because the contaminants are highly concentrated. The data are not good enough to ensure clean fill. The result is that contamination exists at unknown locations in the fill currently in place and in stock piles. No-body knows what should—or can—be done about

the existing contaminated fill. That problem is being left for the future.

Further complicating analysis of the problem is the fact that the criteria now in use seem not to be available to the public. Mr Wingard has sued Ecology to force disclosure of the current criteria, so that he can analyze the records of sampling of fill. The Attorney General's office has advised Ecology to provide the criteria..

In a related issue, the Port proposes to use severely contaminated fill in an embankment around its Industrial Wastewater Lagoon 3; existing plans do not deal with the inevitable added contamination that this would create. Nor is it known if the embankment's design has been reviewed for compliance with state regulations for such structures.



*Continued from page 4*     **FAA Noise Policy**

The policy as proposed by FAA is on the Web at [www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/fedreg/a000714c.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/a000714c.html).

FAA has announced that it will post all comments on its website, [www.faa.gov](http://www.faa.gov). As we went to press the comments were not yet posted. Apparently the comments will not be published in print.