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[...more](#)

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PORTSPIN

our regular column
examining the
latest spin doctoring
from the Port of Seattle's
"public relations" machine.

[This issue:
Breaking Silence](#)

[...more](#)

Boeing Field Hearing on Track for April 5

Plans remain unchanged for a public hearing on Monday, April 5, on the draft environmental impact statement for Boeing Field's draft update of its Master Plan. The affair begins at 4.30 p.m. in Room 110 of the Airport's terminal building, at 7277 Perimeter Rd. So., in Seattle, just off Airport Way So. The relevant documents – which are extensive – may be viewed at

<http://www.metrokc.gov/airport/masterplan/index.htm>

The deadline for comments on the draft documents is April 9.

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Truth in Aviation

Newsletter of the Regional Commission
on Airport Affairs (RCAA)



Port of Seattle Seeks \$198.1 Million Bail-out from Feds

The Seattle daily papers have reported a closed-doors effort by the Port of Seattle to snag a huge Federal bail-out for the third-runway project (another \$198.1 million). RCAA has issued a call for e-mails & phone calls to people in Congress to oppose this proposition.

The Port claims that because they are being required to live up to the requirements of federal environmental law (such as the 1973 Clean Water Act), the federal government should reimburse them for their compliance costs. If this works, then the same principle should apply to every other project in the country where environmental mitigation is required!

The fact is, of course, that the Port & its consultants have consistently mis-stated the true costs of the project, even when they were warned, over & over, that their estimates were invalid.

Contact Information for Representatives & Senators:

To reach U.S. Rep. Adam **Smith** (D-9) (South-West King County), you may e-mail him at adam.smith@mail.house.gov .

U.S. Rep. Jim **McDermott** (D-7) (most of Seattle) does not reveal his e-mail address. You have to submit a comment through his website, & only if you live in his district. <http://www.house.gov/mcdermott/>

His office phone in the District of Columbia is 1.202.225.3106, & his office FAX number is 1.202.225.6197

U.S. Rep. Jennifer **Dunn** (R-8) (Bellevue & other Eastside communities) does not reveal her e-mail address. You have to submit a comment through her website, & only if you live in her district. <http://www.house.gov/dunn/>

Her office phone in the District of Columbia is 1.202.225.7761. She does not list a D.C. FAX number.

U.S. Senator Patty **Murray** -- Senator Murray's District of Columbia phone number is: 1-202.224-2621. Comments can be submitted through her website: <http://murray.senate.gov/contact/>

LINKS

[Seattle Times story](#)
[Seattle PI story](#)

[Rep. Jim McDermott](#)
[Rep. Jennifer Dunn](#)
[Sen. Patty Murray](#)
[Sen. Maria Cantwell](#)

U.S. Senator Maria **Cantwell** -- Senator Cantwell's District of Columbia phone number is: 1.202.224.3441. Comments can be submitted through her website:

<http://cantwell.senate.gov/contact/>

Office telephone numbers for all U.S. Representatives & U.S. Senators can be found at the following websites:

U.S. House of Representatives --

<http://clerk.house.gov/members/index.php>

and the U.S. Senate --

http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

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Sea-Tac Needs \$192.6 Million for Two-Year Runway Construction Project

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Contrary to some reports, the bid has *not* been awarded. The bid documents are under review by Port staff, & also by the Department of Ecology. No deadline has been announced for the actual award.

The Airport's public-relations spokesman Bob Parker told the *Daily Journal of Commerce* that the work could be done "according to the current law". Mr Parker indicated to *Truth in Aviation* that "current law" did not include the restrictions placed on use of the Synthetic Precipitation Leaching Procedure ("SPLP") in the ruling of the Pollution Control Hearings Board now under appeal before the Supreme Court. In the Airport's view, the passage of the "dirty fill bill" (SSB 5787) in 2003 overruled the order of the Board.

Ecology Breaks Its Promise to Supreme Court

The Airport Communities Coalition takes a different view: In a letter dated March 19, the ACC's lead attorney, Peter Eglick, cautioned the Department of Ecology not to rely on the dirty-fill bill as an excuse to allow contaminated fill into the embankment. Mr Eglick reminded Ecology that the Department had made a commitment to the Supreme Court that it would *not* "[take] any immediate action based on SSB 5787". It was on that basis that the Court dismissed the petition of ACC directly challenging the constitutionality of SSB 5787.

Recently, ACC has obtained documents that indicate that Ecology has violated this commitment. Within three months of its assurance to the Court, Ecology authorized a Work Plan allowing the Port to use the SPLP procedure to approve fill for the next two years' work – estimated at nine million cubic yards. The Work Plan To Qualify Fill Materials, dated October 3, 2003, states that under specified conditions [fill fails the usual test for various metals], "the fill source supplier may use the Synthetic Precipitation Leaching Procedure " The SPLP procedure may also be used to allow the Port to use fill contaminated with PCHBs.

Mr Eglick called upon Ecology to advise the Port, immediately, that actions to import fill under the provisions of the dirty-fill bill "would be illegal, unpermitted, and actionable".

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Libby McLarty, President of "Preserve Our Islands, said, " Just as RCAA and CASE continue their David and Goliath battle against the Port, so are the citizens on Vashon-Maury Islands as they fight Glacier Northwest. This win is a reminder that even when the odds are against you, citizen activists can prevail."

Northwest may appeal to the (State) Shoreline Hearings Board, within 21 days. Maury Island opponents of the mining project expect that an appeal will be filed, & are raising money to defend the County decision.

Assuming that Glacier appeals, many months will pass before the final outcome is known. In the mean time, other hopeful gravel-pit operators will surely increase pressure on local governments for permits to crank up gravel production at their various sites.

Two projects are especially "active" at this time. First is the Grouse Ridge mine project in the Snoqualmie Valley (East King County). Weyerhaeuser is a prime mover of this one. Fill from this area would have to move from the site by truck, on I-90. Opposing the project is Cascade Gateway Foundation. Check their website for current information: www.cascadegateway.org . The other major concern is the Fred Hill Materials ("Shine pit") project on the west shore of Hood Canal in Jefferson County. Fill would move to market by barge & larger cargo ships. The Hood Canal Coalition has successfully fought this project to a standstill – for the moment.

▶ ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

[King County Report & Decision](#)

[Application & FEIS on King County Website](#)

[Preserve Our Island Press Release of March 16](#)

▶ LINKS

[Preserve Our Islands](#)

[Cascade Gateway Foundation](#)

[Hood Canal Coalition](#)

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Southwest Airlines Cuts Sea-Tac Flights—Costs Too High

▶ **LINKS**

[Puget Sound Business
Journal Article](#)

Southwest Airlines, which operates regional jets out of Sea-Tac, has cut its daily flights between Sea-Tac and Spokane from nine per day to only five, to reduce its high cost of doing business at Sea-Tac.

The Airport's director, Gina Marie Lindsey, blamed the high costs on a “perfect storm” of unexpected high costs and low revenues – terrorist attacks and high costs of terminal expansion projects. Ms Lindsey claimed that high-cost projects could not be brought under control, saying, “our large capital program [for the South Terminal] was a ship that already had sailed”. As of Sept. 11, 2001, the work was 32 percent completed.

Bad Planning Created "Perfect Storm"

An RCAA spokesperson commented, “This is no perfect storm. The Port's financial planning has been criticized for years. The Port was asleep on the dock when that ship sailed. They should have noticed the world-wide recession that began at the end of 2002, from which we are still recovering. And even after a ship sails, a prudent captain knows how to stop it when a storm looms. Unfortunately, the Port only knows one command – ‘full speed ahead – into the storm’. If they are facing the perfect storm, why are they going ahead with their \$192 million runway project?”

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Port spin: Breaking Silence

If you want to hear the sound of silence, ask the Port of Seattle: "How do you plan to pay for the third runway?"

The Port's public-relations folk apparently have a permanent stonewall order on this issue, because the Port has a very big problem. Whatever else it is, the third runway is not a money-maker. It generates no new income, yet it is the most expensive runway ever built on land--even by the Port's understated cost estimates. So, it has to be subsidized somehow. How?

Well, last week, the Port's silence broke somewhat, when the local papers announced that it was applying heavy lobbying pressure behind closed doors to get the Federal government to pony up another \$198.1 million--curiously similar to the exact amount of the low bid for the next phase of work, opened on March 3 -- \$192.6 million.

When the FAA made its initial large grants for the runway, the understanding with the Port was "this is all you get." Maybe the Port's financial people are hoping the FAA forgets about that. Their argument is--apparently--that they unexpectedly had to meet requirements of the Clean Water Act. But, of course, that act was passed in 1973, and they have been perfectly aware of the requirements since they first brought up the project--because the communities next door have been telling them about their water pollution problems all along. So, apparently, the plan was to save money by ignoring the Clean Water Act, effectively passing the pollution costs on to the neighbors. But the neighbors organized, & took their concerns to the Department of Ecology and the Army Engineers. In general, those environmental regulators have backed up the neighbors, by requiring the Port to deal with pollution itself, at its expense.

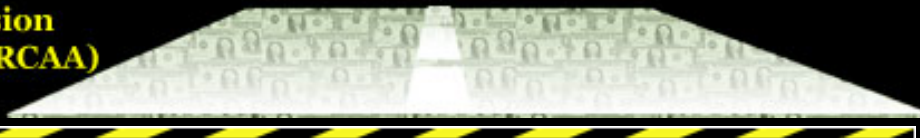
Want to hear the sound of silence again? Ask the Port how they are going to pay for the rest the runway project. Little undisclosed costs like THE GREAT WALL OF SEA-TAC or the costs of financing on all the borrowing that they are doing.

Another bailout? Here's our guess on the Port's strategy: Never reveal the real costs of the runway or the plan for financing it. Build it piecemeal any way possible. Then when it's done, dump the bill on King County property tax payers. Dump the environmental costs on the neighbors. And pray for a bail-out.

[TIA article: Port of Seattle Seeks Huge Federal Bail-out](#)

[TIA article: Sea-Tac Needs \\$192.6 Million for Two-Year Runway Construction Project](#)

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Ambitious Goals Announced For Miller-Walker Basin Plan

Possible measures to improve water quality & to reduce erosive flooding in the Miller – Walker Creeks Basin were discussed at the second public meeting on plans for the Basin, held on March 18.

The project team has set ambitious goals for the project. They hope to restore the “flow regime” to conditions as they were 30 years ago, & to increase usage of the streams by anadromous fish (salmon/steelhead) to approximately 2000 spawners a year, a very great increase. Water quality would be improved by removal of 50 percent of total zinc and 80 percent of total suspended solids.

The presentation included detailed analysis of specific work items that would be necessary to meet the goals, including estimated costs & some indication of funding sources.

Members of the public in attendance were concerned that there were no numeric goals for removing total copper (a severe hazard for fish), & that there seemed to be little recognition of the adverse impact of Sea-Tac Airport activities on the health of the Basin. As of the most recent reports (December 2003), copper levels in stormwater discharges from the Airport have risen in some instances to 10 times greater than State water-quality standards allow.

Remaining unaddressed are community concerns about possible shifting of third-runway mitigation costs to this Basin restoration project.

No date has been set for a follow-up meeting.

Extensive maps were presented at the meeting and have been posted in our library. On the right are links to the maps in our library. You can also find them on the county's website at [this link](#) [look under the meeting notice].

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▶ **LINKS**

[-Power Point Presentation from Meeting \[acrobat file\]](#)

[-Comment Form](#)

[-Planning Effort Website](#)

[-TIA Article on Planning Effort, Sept. 2003](#)

[-Miller Basin Map](#)

[-Miller Water Quality Map](#)

[-Walker Basin Map](#)

[-Walker Water Quality Map](#)

[-Miller/Walker Expected Redevelopment Map](#)

[-Miller Project Map](#)

[-Walker Project Map](#)