

PDK AIRPORT RED ALERT! - International Customs at PDK

November 11, 2006

Dear Citizens Concerned About PDK Airport:

Do you want international jet traffic at PDK Airport at all hours of the day and night?

If not, we need your immediate action NOW.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

This coming Tuesday morning, November 14, a contract to renew and expand the major Mercury Air Contract at PDK Airport will be brought before the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners (Item E6 on the Agenda).

This important contract renewal for one of the three large fixed base operators (FBOs) at PDK Airport could be approved this Tuesday. The lease would extend and enlarge the scope of the valuable Mercury Air lease for the next twenty years.

Despite the on-going efforts of concerned citizens for more than a month to secure a copy of this proposed lease for review, we only were able to get an incomplete copy of the revised lease proposal on Wednesday this week.

Included in the 5-page Narrative explaining the scope of anticipated actions under this lease agreement are the following disturbing provisions (page 5, numbers 11 and 12):

11. In addition, spaces will be designed to support the US Customs and Border Protection in accordance with their current technical design standards. Subject to CPB approval, this new facility will provide the only qualifying location for receiving international flights in Atlanta other than Hartsfield. (Emphasis added)

12. Incorporated into the facility design will be adequate space for future TSA baggage and passenger screening if those become necessary. (Emphasis added)

WHY IS THIS A PROBLEM?

Allowing regular International Customs service at PDK will encourage increasing numbers of international jet flights, larger jets, and more disruptive jet flights, both day and night. The serious pollution and health problems caused by jet fuel emissions from larger jets also will be increased.

PDK has a 66,000 lb. contractual weight limit for aircraft using the Airport. Many of the jets capable of carrying the amount of jet fuel for international overseas flights will presumably be in violation of that weight limit.

If the Commissioners vote favorably on the Mercury Air contract with the above provisions, they thus will be acting in violation of the contractual agreement made between DeKalb County and the FAA on the 66,000 lb. weight limit.

PDK Airport and DeKalb County are currently conducting a major PDK Airport Master Plan (costing nearly one million dollars) in order to guide and direct the Airport's development over the next several decades. Approving a major lease expansion of this kind before the development and approval of the Master Plan itself would preempt the County's long-term planning process.

The unwillingness of the County and PDK Airport to provide timely information to public well in advance of bringing the lease up for possible vote, undercuts Open Government in DeKalb County and efforts of citizens to insure that the public is getting its money's worth for leases of valuable County-owned property at PDK Airport (no other competitive bids have been solicited for this Mercury Air lease property, for example).

Note that there are also other potentially objectionable features in the core of the 34-page Mercury Air contract--including a "major airport maintenance and repair" facility (page 3, section 2:6)--that also need to be scrutinized closely before the Commissioners vote on this major lease.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO NOW?

If you are concerned about these issues, please send a brief e-mail message or call each of your DeKalb County Commissioners and CEO Jones NOW (see details below).

In your own words, with no more than a few sentences or paragraphs at most, please

Ask the Commissioners to:

1. eliminate provisions allowing an International Customs Office at PDK from the Mercury Air Lease narrative and contract.
2. add an explicit statement that any such International Customs Office or similar facility is prohibited in the future at PDK Airport.
3. prohibit any major engine repair facility for jets at PDK Airport.
4. not approve any major PDK airport leases until the county has approved the PDK Airport Master Plan and corresponding PDK Airport Layout Plan.

HERE ARE THE PEOPLE TO WRITE:

NOTE: Be sure to send a copy of your message, separately, to each of your Commissioners and to CEO Jones, since the County has installed spam-blockers that won't allow a message to be sent to all the Commissioners at the same time.

DeKalb CEO Vernon Jones ceo@co.dekalb.ga.us

Elaine Boyer	njmcbrid@co.dekalb.ga.us
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Larry Johnson	LLJohnso@co.dekalb.ga.us
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Connie Stokes	conniestokes@co.dekalb.ga.us

To secure the phone numbers for specific Commissioners, call: 404-371-2886.

Please write NOW to your Commissioners and CEO Jones about your concerns about the projected International Customs facility at PDK Airport.

Please also circulate this e-mail message as widely as possible with others who may be concerned about these issues.

Your action NOW is URGENT. Once the County has approved a major lease, that effectively trumps later actions the Commissioners may take.

Again, Please Write NOW.

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