

About Oregon Aviation Revealed

The purpose of this website is to provide educational articles along with links to related sites on the largely unchecked and unmonitored growth of aviation interests in the state of Oregon. Issues such as how and why this has occurred, who benefits, and who suffers the negative consequences will be explored. It will highlight the concerns of area residents who daily bear the brunt of the all too often one-sided political and business decisions made by elected and appointed officials - decisions that create serious noise, safety, environmental, and security ramifications.

Both Political Parties Degrade the Environment

To be sure this is not a Democrat versus Republican dynamic, for in Oregon members of both parties are currently and have historically compromised the livability and quality of life of thousands of Oregonians while either covertly or overtly advocating for aviation interests. It is important to bear in mind that in recent years a series of democratic governors, including Neil Goldschmidt, John Kitzhaber, and Ted Kulongoski, have presided over the demise of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality thereby creating a situation whereby laws designed to enforce air, water, and noise regulations are either inadequately enforced or altogether ignored. Not surprisingly this has been a boon for airport related business interests, aviation hobbyists, and quasi-government entities such as the Port of Portland who have either benefited or directly profited from this arrangement.

These same governors with the approval of a Republican-controlled Senate are responsible for appointing the Port of Portland Board of Commissioners - a group who despite widespread public opposition and outcry remains committed to aggressively expanding aviation activity at the network of airports owned and operated by the Port of Portland - Portland International, Hillsboro, Troutdale, and Mulino.

The Oregon State Department of Aviation, whose director and board members are also governor appointees, bear a significant burden of responsibility for the damage inflicted when attempts are made to foist airports and air traffic on rural communities whose residents yearn for a quiet, peaceful environment free from the noise, pollution, safety and security risks that accompany aviation activities. It is also troubling that this agency contributes nothing to the general fund despite the deleterious nature of its expansionistic agenda.

Local county commissioners in conjunction with city council representatives who align with the well-heeled aviation community rather than the majority of their constituents also need to be held fully accountable for the erosion of livability, land use policies, and environmental standards in rural and urban areas alike.

Scarce Educational Dollars Fund Aviation

How is it that while the threat of school closures looms throughout the Portland area, tuition is increasing at state-run colleges and universities at an alarming rate, the school

year for elementary and high school students has been shortened, the teacher/student ratio has continued to increase, and funding for the art, library, and sports programs has steadily eroded over the past decade, that community colleges such as Portland Community College (PCC) at Rock Creek and Lane Community College (LCC) have had the wherewithal to accumulate a fleet of at least 25 aircraft -11 at PCC, 15 at LCC? Students in these taxpayer-subsidized aviation science programs generate enormous amounts of noise and pollution including lead based fuel emissions. The general aviation industry continues to spew lead, a highly toxic substance that was banned from automotive fuel some years ago, into the environment on a daily basis. It is also noteworthy that the University of Oregon has recently used taxpayer monies to subsidize an Aviation Leadership degree program.

Excessive Air Traffic In Oregon - A Global Perspective

A comparison between the country of England and the state of Oregon further illustrates just how excessive the situation has become. England, with a total land area of 94,251 and a population of 50,093,800 as of 2004, is one the most densely populated countries in the world. Though Oregon with a total land area of 97,093 square miles is slightly larger, its population count of roughly 3.6 million is but a fraction of England's. Indeed the population of England is more than 13 times that of Oregon. The population of London alone is nearly twice that of the entire state of Oregon.

Yet just two of the Port of Portland's owned and operated airports, more specifically Portland International (PDX) and Hillsboro Airport logged more annual operations than Heathrow did in 2005. According to its website Heathrow, the world's busiest international airport, logs 469,560 annual operations while serving 67.7 million passengers on just two runways. PDX with three runways served 13.9 million passengers last year while logging approximately 260,000 operations.

Gatwick Airport, the second largest international airport in England, has one runway. This facility logs about the same number of operations, over a quarter of a million annually, as Hillsboro Airport. A major difference is that Gatwick serves 32 million passengers whereas Hillsboro doesn't track passenger counts as it is billed as an "Executive" airport designed primarily to cater to the corporate and business elite as well as Hillsboro Aviation's huge number of flight training operations.

Heathrow and Gatwick combined are able to manage 720,560 operations on 3 runways while providing service to close to 100 million passengers whereas the Port of Portland with 3 runways at PDX and 2 at Hillsboro (this doesn't even include the runways at Troutdale and Mulino - the other two airports owned and operated by the Port) complains that it is encountering difficulties in managing 510,000 operations thus Port representatives are now lobbying for yet a third runway at the Hillsboro site.

What seems to be the problem?

Is it difficult for the Port to manage resources wisely? Do Oregon leaders in conjunction with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) lack the expertise required to manage public funds frugally and responsibly? Why are taxpayer funded government entities

like the FAA, the Port of Portland, the State of Oregon, and local governments dedicating public money to unnecessary and environmentally degrading projects? Why should taxpayer money be wasted on building yet a third runway at Hillsboro Airport for the sole purpose of subsidizing an "Executive" airport particularly in a state where many of the corporations who benefit from this arrangement barely contribute to the tax base? Why should the livability and quality of life of the entire region be forfeited on behalf of Port tenants such as Hillsboro Aviation who profit handsomely by offering up the skies over our homes and neighborhoods to international, out of state and taxpayer-subsidized Portland Community College aviation students while jeopardizing the environment throughout the entire region?

Sadly, there is currently no major political party in this state or in this country for that matter that has stepped forward to represent the best interests of the vast majority of area residents.

Given this deplorable state of affairs it should come as no surprise that: According to a recent EPA survey Portland's air quality is among the worst in the nation. The Willamette River is a major EPA superfund site due in large part to the Port of Portland's role as a major polluter.

In 2005 Oregon had one of the highest aviation accident rates in the entire country. Aviation noise incursions are becoming increasingly more relentless in both urban and rural settings despite a growing body of evidence documenting the negative health impacts of air traffic noise.

The DEQ noise office has been unfunded since the early 1990's. The DEQ air quality monitoring program was dismantled during the 2005 legislative session.

The DEQ now relies on corporate research and monetary contributions for water monitoring thereby allowing the very businesses responsible for the pollution to monitor it. (<http://www.columbiariverkeeper.org/alerts.htm>) In recent years the State of Oregon, the Port of Portland and the Federal Aviation Administration along with many local and appointed officials have allied themselves with the aviation industry in focusing almost exclusively on accumulating profits for the aviation sector while turning their backs on the common good people of this state. In so doing they have done a tremendous disservice to the people of Oregon. This website intends to shed light on this highly imbalanced and unjust state of affairs.

www.OregonAviationRevealed.org