

July 8, 2009

Mr. Daniel J. Millenacker, Program Manager
FAA-Minneapolis Airports District Office
Minneapolis- St. Paul International Airport
6020 28th Avenue South, Room 102
Minneapolis, MN 55450-2706

Dear Mr. Millenacker:

Please accept a belated Happy Fourth of July. It has been awhile since I have received your greatly appreciated courtesy- call update. Recently, several concerns have come to the attention of the Watershed Watchers that need clarification, but first, I would like to thank you for adding the EIS Meeting Minutes to the West Bend EIS website. You know I have been outspoken about releasing meeting minutes and all public information for taxpayers' review if public funds are involved.

Our group's first concern relates to the enclosed letter to the editor in the local Daily News on July 1, 2009. The letter is from Alan Price, who identifies himself as a member of the West Bend Airport Commission, and it has us wondering what is going on with the EIS and whether critical information has not been made available to us. For example, in his letter, Mr. Price states, "Mr. Torinus knows the facts of the situation." If Mr. Torinus is involved as suggested by Mr. Price's letter, then our group needs someone to represent the people of this community who have had to put up with this project mess far too long. Otherwise, I object to Mr. Torinus being involved in any way during the EIS process. His only involvement should be a letter to you explaining he no longer needs the airport as often because his business is mainly in China and Mexico, he has downsized in West Bend, and no longer needs the airport three times a week. For many years, Mr. Torinus has been an ardent supporter of the airport, but informed me last month, "I don't use the airport as much - maybe three times a month" and, furthermore, he said, "I want to save the watershed." Whatever the facts of the situation are, it is imperative that the EIS process be conducted in an objective and fair manner and the best way to do that is with full transparency and dissemination of accurate information.

As an aside, I have included an interesting article titled "Economy quiets corporate traffic," from the June 25, 2009, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, which refers to the noticeable economic downturn from the CEO's flying to Washington, relative to the decline in the West Bend airport business. It is interesting because if you check the West Bend business history, the decline in business at the West Bend airport began around 2002.

Another concern reflected in Mr. Price's letter to the editor is his statement that "Although mitigation cannot be declared final until after the impact study is approved, our state is quite satisfied with our plan's generous offering of new public lands in exchange for our use of mostly marginal wetlands (once wetlands but later farmed)." Is there any substance to Mr. Price's statements? Has there been a determination that the wetlands are "marginal" contrary to the Wetlands Delineation Report? Has a mitigation plan been presented and approved? Or, is Mr. Price simply spinning the same questionable, unsubstantiated

rambling rhetoric that has been put forth by the city and the West Bend Airport Commission since the airport expansion project began decades ago?

A third concern is whether the helicopters at the Army National Guard use the airport runways? In the last paragraph of the enclosed May 6, 2009, press release, Mr. Butler describes the airport runways. "The airport consists of two runways, parallel taxiways, apron area, connector runways, terminal building and auto parking lot. Together the runways accommodate about 51,000 aircraft take-offs and landings each year." Nothing is said about the Army National Guard using the runways in the press release. In the PEA the operations number for year 2000 was grossly exaggerated, 58,000, including 14,000 helicopter operations. (An asterisk below the information stated the 58,000 as an estimate.) In the final draft EA, the number of operations, probably another estimate, was 51,700, which included the 14,000 Army National Guard helicopter operations. Since he did not mention the Army National Guard at all in the press release, Mr. Butler should have been honest and eliminated the 14,000 helicopter operations from the new 51,000 estimate, and used the more realistic- but still unbelievable - operation count of 37,000 for general aviation take-offs and landings each year. Mr. Butler's description is just another inaccurate, deceptive way to dupe the public into believing this is an airport with a need and purpose. I respectfully request clarification as to why the Army National Guard has anything to do with the West Bend airport? I assume our tax dollars are already funding the military operations at the Army National Guard location. It appears taxpayers are expected to pay double, once for the proposed municipally owned airport expansion and again for the military airport, if the helicopter count is included. These questions have been asked before, without answers. How many helicopters use the West Bend Airport runways and what is the real, documented operations' count? Our grassroots group has been waiting for a long time for these answers.

A side note from the same press release was the announcement of \$237,895 from state and federal taxes for projects, one of which is repairing the pavement of runway 13/31. "The deteriorated runway is a prime concern," reports Mr. Butler, but everyone living in this area knows runway 13/31 is closest to the river in a wetlands area and subject to flooding like the other property in the watershed. This is another example of an airport evolving from irresponsible decisions, in an inappropriate wetlands area, and a City that appears to lack funds for a municipal airport, without financial aid from state and federal governments. Mr. Maclay is right; it is "an unnecessary public works project."

Watershed Watchers and many other groups throughout the state and other Great Lakes states have been following this project. I respectfully request answers to the concerns presented in this letter and to any other updates you can provide at this time.

We have greatly appreciated your updates in the past and look forward to having the rightful answers presented to us, not uninformed words from the Airport Commission and others.

Sincerely,

Marilyn A. John
Watershed Watchers, Inc.