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KING COUNTY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT COMMUNITY COALITION

KCIACC

Equity Needs for the Community



SIERRA CLUB

February 26, 2023

Government Accountability and Oversight Committee
1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Support Ordinance 2023-0053 regarding the health and climate impacts of King County International Airport (KCIA).

Dear Honorable Chair von Reichbauer, Vice Chair Kohl-Welles, Council Members Balducci, McDermott, Dunn, and Dembowski:

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support to pass Ordinance 2023-0053.

The ordinance calls for an assessment of the county airport's impacts on the environment and public health, not a "shut down of the airport." Ordinance 2023-0053 reflects a community benefits agreement. A community benefits agreement is a signed commitment that demonstrates shared goals toward advancing environment, equity and social responsibilities between communities. We seek a community benefits agreement to center community health and priorities that align with the King County Climate Action Plan, related community engagement guidance and policies passed by King County.

With the passing of the WA Healthy Environment For All Act (HEAL), King County Declaration of racism as a public health crisis, King County Strategic Climate Action Plan and local policies such as the Port of Seattle adoption of the Duwamish Valley Community Benefits Commitment, 2023-0053, serves as an opportunity for KCIA to address community concerns and work to resolve issues around the advancement of procedural, environmental, social and climate justice. These actions of implementation by KCIA are long overdue.¹

These provisions do not close the airport, these provisions uplift basic civil rights for enhanced community engagement and advancement of environmental justice for the communities impacted by the King County International Airport. The roundtable is not enough to center communities priorities for Duwamish Valley neighbors and Beacon Hill residents disproportionately impacted by the operations and use of leaded fuels at KCIA/Boeing Field.

As you know, the KCIA Master Plan proposes to accommodate a 1.3% annual increase in flights over the next 2 decades. In addition, it plans to move the large runway 300 ft north, construct a new fuel farm, redevelop the hangar area, construct a parking ramp for large aircrafts, re-pave runways, and purchase land for facilities' new runway location. Community voices should be heard and addressed in any proposed growth or redevelopment of the airport.

Communities near KCIA are home to 70% people of color, 42% foreign born, and 71.7% low income. KCIA is within 2 miles of 12 playgrounds and playfields, 21 parks, 31 schools, and 61 places of worship. Furthermore, King County residents who live within 1 mile of an airport face 5 years shorter life expectancy and mothers face a staggering 43% increased rate of premature birth compared to the rest of King County.²

Ordinance 2023-0053 is a critical tool to ensure KCIA/Boeing Field meaningfully engages and directly consults with our overburdened communities in order to effectively address equity and justice needs across our environment, health and climate.

Ordinance 2023-0053 calls for:

- 1) Two additional community seats to the existing KCIA Roundtable – Beacon Hill and South Park;
- 2) It calls for the creation of a Roundtable advisory subcommittee to advise and make recommendations to the airport management, county executive, and county council;
- 3) King County, the airport and the subcommittee will co-create and maintain a community benefits agreement addressing the environmental, climate, health, economic and livability concerns of residents and workers in airport-adjacent Duwamish valley neighborhoods, including, but not limited to Georgetown, South Park, Tukwila Allentown and Beacon Hill communities;

¹ <https://www.portseattle.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/Resolution%203767%20with%20Exhibit.pdf>

² These stats come from state-mandated research presented to the King County Board of Health on March 18, 2021.

- 4) The ordinance also calls for the airport to conduct a comprehensive environmental impact assessment of all aeronautical, land transportation and airport activities at the airport every 10 years.

To date, KCIA has not measured nor provided public data regarding its impacts on neighboring communities. For example, KCIA continues to operate with leaded fuels with no air monitoring in place. This means communities have been left in the dark about the causes of harms which drive health inequities in the neighborhoods.

Leaded aviation fuel contains ~2.12 grams of lead per gallon of gas, and the most recent detailed facilities report for KCIA from the EPA in 2017 estimated the KCIA airport was responsible for nearly 800 pounds of airborne lead emissions that year.

Studies of blood lead levels (BLL's) in children living proximal to other general aviation airports in the United States have demonstrated BLL's that meet or exceed the levels observed in the 2014 Flint Water Crisis. These studies raise the question: Are the thousands of children living near Boeing Field exposed to toxic levels of lead that could result in permanent and irreparable harm?

The current King County International Community Coalition (KCIACC) Community Equity Needs represent actions long overdue for implementation by KCIA:

1. A thorough assessment of the environmental impact of the Master Plan Update.
2. Include KCIA into the King County Climate Strategic Plan with target GHG emission reduction targets.
3. Have KCIA develop an environmental, social, and economic policy to guide the level of accommodation of flight increases.
4. Include Beacon Hill, Georgetown, and South Park with nearby KCIA communities in targeted local hire recruitment and targeted selection of BIPOC communities for KCIA training apprenticeships, jobs and contracts.
5. Engagement with Beacon Hill Council, Georgetown and additional affected residents to (1) plot the KCIA air flights and type of aircraft over Beacon Hill and Georgetown (2) measure current and future air and noise pollution and (3) identify and implement mitigation measures.
6. Inform community when the projected flight increases approach or exceed forecast and if this occurs, reopen Community Benefits Agreement.
7. Include the Duwamish River Community Coalition in the development of a strategy to mitigate negative health impacts of the fuel storage farm near King County International Airport communities.
8. Increase a green canopy around the airport using approved plantings.
9. Include bike pathways to help slow down the traffic.
10. No military planes.
11. Allow community use of space for COVID supply distribution and additional events.
12. No airport expansion.

This request is the necessary catalyst to ensure the concerns of overburdened communities and vulnerable populations including Georgetown, South park, Tukwila-Allentown and Beacon Hill are heard, mitigated and fully addressed.

Thank you for each of your time and attention to this important matter. This is a matter of life and death for King County's airport communities and future generations.

"These are critical issues, and they are not simply technical. They must be decided with the impact on neighbors and climate change foremost in consideration." - Kathy Daweson, 98103

Sincerely the Undersigned,

King County International Airport Community Coalition

Velma Veloria
Friends of Georgetown History (FOGHI)
Duwamish River Community Coalition
Georgetown Community Council
350 Seattle Aviation
Spean Rajana
Climate Leaders, Health and Equity Alliance
Green Buildings Now
WA Build Back Black Alliance
Eco Infinity Nation
Puget Soundkeeper
Beacon Hill Council
Sierra Club
Climate Solutions