



50 F St. NW, Suite 750
Washington, D.C. 20001

T. 202-737-7950
F. 202-273-7951

www.aopa.org

October 13, 2016

Michael P. Huerta, Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta,

On behalf of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), I write today to urge the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to move expeditiously to administratively issue a cease and desist order or, alternatively, seek injunctive relief in Federal court to bring a halt to the dismantling of the Santa Monica Municipal Airport (SMO) until all pending legal and administrative complaints have been fully resolved.

The City of Santa Monica must be held accountable as they continue, unabated, to destroy this vibrant and iconic airport, which clearly does not meet the intent of their federal grant assurances. SMO is a key reliever airport in the Los Angeles basin and it is rich in history as the birthplace of Douglas Aircraft and home to the first Powder Puff Derby, an all-women air race lead by Amelia Earhart.

At the end of World War II, like many other airports that had been developed in support of the war effort, Santa Monica Airport was returned to the city. As the Federal government had invested millions of dollars of taxpayer funds in improvements at the airport, the airport was deeded to the city with a number of covenants recorded on the deed. What is now occurring at Santa Monica will have far-reaching consequences throughout the United States if the FAA allows this to continue.

We applaud the agency for the September 26, 2016 Notice of Investigation (NOI) and subsequent subpoenas to city officials regarding actions the city has already taken to dismantle the airport.

It is vital that the FAA hold the city accountable, especially as the city has accepted federal grants and is therefore obligated under Federal Grant Assurances. Moreover, the city is also accountable to the federal government through Surplus Property Obligations, which requires the property to be used for public airport purposes for the use and benefit of the public on reasonable terms and without unjust discrimination and without grant or exercise of any exclusive right.

At the direction of the city council, the city has taken anti-airport actions including refusal to enter into new rental agreements with aviation tenants, refusal to accept rent payments from

existing tenants, eviction notices to two Fixed Base Operators (FBOs), and tripling monthly rent for the iconic Typhoon Restaurant, which has led to the restaurant to announce it is closing next month.

This strangulation strategy employed by the City of Santa Monica does not comport with the intent of the federal grant obligations. We urge the agency to act on this request as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Baker', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark Baker
President and CEO