

Hanscom Air Force Base vs Hanscom Field Airport

Summary

Hanscom Air Force Base should not be confused with Hanscom Field Airport. Unlike the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport), the Air Force Base at Hanscom Field has always been a good neighbor to the area communities. The Air Force Base has a minimal environmental impact and is not part of the threat to the historic or natural resources of the area.

Background

Hanscom Air Force Base operated the airport at Hanscom Field after taking control of it during World War II. In 1997 the Air Force Base ceased the deployment of an active wing of the Air Force at the airfield, and control of the airport reverted to the State which gave it to Massport to operate "For the good of the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts".

The Air Force Base occasionally uses the airport for staging military operations and was used during Desert Storm. In addition the Air Force has regular flights to other Air Force bases which go through Hanscom Field. However, the Air Force makes up less than 1% of the aviation activity at the airport and has a negligible traffic, pollution, and noise impact.

Hanscom Air Force Base: A good neighbor

Hanscom Air Force Base regularly participates in public meetings and communicates openly regarding activities that might create environmental impact. Hanscom Air Force base participated in the negotiations with Massport for a Memorandum of Understanding regarding future plans for the airport, as originated by former Massport director Peter Blute. The Air Force Base contributed to the work of the Hanscom Field Noise Workgroup under former Mass. Secretary of Environmental Affairs Trudy Coxe. The Air Force Base is a regular and valued participant in public meetings of the Hanscom Field Advisory Commission. When the Air Force recently consolidated certain facilities within the Base, they worked cooperatively and openly with the communities to understand and mitigate problems in advance.

The communities, through their elected representatives and all the local preservation groups, have repeatedly expressed their support of the Air Force Base.

Conclusion

Many people are confused about the distinction between Hanscom Air Force Base and Hanscom Field Airport. These are completely separate and distinct entities. The threats to

the historic and natural resources of the area are not due to the Air Force Base, they are due to a quasi-public authority, Massport, about which a former Massport director said:

"Massport is a public agency that has lost its sense of mission, confused its priorities, and forgotten the public it is supposed to serve"

Frederick Salvucci, Boston Globe