

May 7, 2024

Office of the Honorable Governor Maura Healey
Office of Constituent Services
Massachusetts State House, 24 Beacon Street
Office of the Governor, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Proposed expansion of Hanscom Airfield, Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and Climate Goals

Dear Governor Healey,

We, the Acton Select Board, are writing this letter in solidarity with our historic neighboring towns in opposition to the expansion proposal for the Massachusetts Port Authority's (Massport) private Hanscom Airfield just 21 miles west of Boston's Logan Airport. As you know the proposal currently on the table is to expand the existing private airfield which sits on public land. The current proposal is 17 new hangars with a total floor area of 395,700 sq. ft. serving privately owned based aircraft. As a result of feedback received the developers did "scale back" the project by reducing the number of hangars from 26 to 17. However, the square footage of the facility has not changed as they increased the size of the hangars. The scale of the project was not changed.

Massport officials say the current proposal is a response to existing demand for hangars at Hanscom as well as a means of maximizing revenue and complying with federal requirements to provide transportation services to the public. This private project does not benefit the public it benefits only private jet owners.

In reference to the Draft Environmental Impact Report listed are just a few inequities that should be addressed/revisited:

GHG Emissions for aircrafts in flight (above 3,000 ft.)-The report only analyzes aircraft CO2 emissions during take-off and landing at the airport. GHG Emissions data for aircrafts in flight

(above 3,000 ft.) should be analyzed and included. Also, analysis shows flights to Europe and to Nantucket having the same emissions.

Increased flights due to hangar expansion - as supported by studies on induced demand

By providing new hangar space for jets, the project proponent encourages new private jet purchases, increased flights and more emissions (this is induced demand). The project proponent must analyze how flights will increase due to the expansion in a revised DEIR.

PFAS superfund contamination at the Project site

The project proponent should include information from the upcoming EPA phase 1 Action Plan re: the PFAS contamination in a revised DEIR, which presents risks to public drinking water supplies in the area and downstream.

Following your lead at the state level, we must continue to incorporate climate science and data into our decision-making. Your first day in office you said, *“The climate crisis is Massachusetts’ greatest challenge, ...we have no time to delay. It is essential that we begin coordinating our climate policy across state agencies and all communities in Massachusetts.”* Allowing this terminal expansion to happen is a direct contradiction to future climate goals, locally, at the State level and across our Country. The town of Acton declared a Climate Emergency on September 8, 2020 at our Special Town Meeting. Acton’s Sustainability Office was created as a direct result of this declaration. We know our neighboring towns are working diligently toward these same climate goals. It cannot be disputed that the additional CO2 from the increase in traffic of private jets (taking off, landing and in the air) will contribute greatly to the delay of meeting these climate goals. It also cannot be disputed that an increase in hangars/size of hangars will increase the number of private jets which undoubtedly will increase emissions.

Along with Acton, the communities Lexington, Bedford, Lincoln and Concord, where the Hanscom Airfield actually lies, possess inherent characteristics which encompass scenic, historical, recreational, cultural, archaeological, and natural elements, which are highly esteemed for their national significance. They are regarded as emblematic, unique, irreplaceable, and distinctly characteristic of the area. Revered by locals, these qualities attract worldwide visitors seeking connection and inspiration from the American narrative. Incidentally, the National Trust for Historic Preservation just placed The Minute Man National Historical Park and Walden Pond, which sits just 4.5 miles west from Hanscom Airfield along the Route 2 corridor, on their list of some of the most endangered sites in the United States. As Hanscom Airfield has expanded and will continue to expand under this current proposal, the gradual rise in vehicular, private aircraft traffic, noise, air pollution, and related factors has gradually eroded the quality of life for residents, wildlife and most definitely detracts from the visitor experience.

In closing, this expansion proposal is counter-intuitive to our future climate goals as a State. Massachusetts has proven to lead by example and we should continue this tradition. This luxury travel mode infrastructure benefits a very small percentage of people. Please address some of the inequities evident in the DEIR.

Sincerely,

Jim Snyder-Grant
Chair

Fran Arsenault
Vice-Chair

Dean Charter
Clerk

Alissa Nicol
Member

David Martin
Member