

Regional Cargo Feeder Aircraft Noise Background

Cargo Feeder Issue

As part of the Part 150 Noise Compatibility Management Plan Update process, the Port of Portland heard significant concerns from North/Northeast Portland and Vancouver residents about the aircraft noise from regional cargo feeder operations.

Regional cargo feeder aircraft fly in and out of PDX in the early morning and early evening hours, delivering time sensitive high value cargo to parts of rural Oregon and southwest Washington. These aircraft are smaller and need to be separated from larger, faster flying jets operating at PDX.

These smaller aircraft travel to meet a fixed deadline for outbound transport in larger jets (UPS and FedEx), which fly back to cargo hubs in the Midwest. Over 120 cargo flights and over 10,000 tons of cargo a day moves via regional cargo feeder aircraft. Cargo being moved includes: medical products, fresh flowers and food, food gift boxes, live insects, industrial and auto parts, overnight letters, internet and catalog purchases, high technology, and U.S. mail.

On April 13th, the Port Commission asked Port staff to work with the community to address the cargo feeder aircraft noise issue and report back to them on our process prior to adoption of the Part 150. Because regional cargo aircraft do not impact the 65 Day night Level noise contours, they are not eligible for consideration in the Part 150.

Ad Hoc Committee

Working with Portland Commissioner Sam Adams' office, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and a group of concerned residents, the Port proposed creation of an ad hoc committee to identify solutions to this community issue. The ad hoc committee – comprised of the Port of Portland, FAA, air cargo operators, Portland and Vancouver area residents, and the cities of Portland and Vancouver - is charged with evaluating preliminary options to reduce regional cargo feeder aircraft noise impacts primarily on North and Northeast Portland residents. The first meeting of this committee was held on May 24

Membership of this committee and decision-making process was discussed at the first committee meeting. Alternative arrival and departure flight paths to be tested were also identified.

A day to test the aeronautical/technical feasibility of alternative flight paths occurred on Saturday, June 18th from 9 am to 3 pm. The alternative routes are designed to move noise impacts from residential areas to transportation and industrial corridors (I-5, I-205 and Columbia Corridor). Residents were involved in observing and measuring noise from proposed flight path alternatives. Noise measurements from these flights were taken at six noise monitors.

We are pleased to report that the test flight day was a success, with strong participation and support from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Citizens Noise Advisory Committee (CNAC), area residents, City of Portland Noise Control Office, and City Commissioner Sam Adams' office.

Two aircraft – one provided by FedEx/Empire Airlines and one chartered by the Port - tested 14 potential new arrival and departure procedures for regional cargo feeders. The I-205/Columbia Industrial Corridor flight procedures proposed by the community

Regional Cargo Feeder Aircraft Noise Background

were not tested due to FAA and cargo operator safety concerns. The testing occurred over a three hour period. Two CNAC members were able to witness the test from the air.

Support from the FAA and cargo operators was critical to the success of the day, ensuring test flights were safely and efficiently executed. The Port appreciates the participation of the FAA, City of Portland, local neighborhood residents, CNAC members, Empire Airlines and Ameriflight in addressing this important community livability issue.

Next Steps

The FAA has committed to conduct further analysis of the 14 flight path alternatives over the next few months. The Port and City Noise Offices will marry this information with noise data and qualitative observations from area residents.

A third meeting of the ad hoc committee will be held on September 15 to discuss the feasibility of various flight alternatives and share qualitative and quantitative observations from the Fly Day. The ad hoc committee will make recommendations on proposed changes to cargo feeder flight paths. The public is invited and welcome to attend all ad hoc committee meetings. Please check the Port website for meeting time and location.

In the interim, the Port reported to the Port Commission on July 13th on the progress on the regional cargo feeder issue. Before recommendations are adopted, there will be broader public notification and outreach by the Port and City. The Port anticipates applying a similar process to address cargo feeder flights over Vancouver. The Port will make formal recommendations to the Port Commission at the conclusion of this process.

For flight path alternatives recommended by the ad hoc committee and Port, the FAA will then do additional analysis to see if the routes are feasible from a safety, airspace and capacity perspective. Implementation of new flight procedures by the FAA is expected to take a minimum of two months, depending on the recommendations.