

STATEMENT OF JOHN WESLER, ACTING ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR FOR POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL AVIATION, FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION, BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONCERNING AIRCRAFT NOISE AT CANNON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. FEBRUARY 10, 1981.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

I AM PLEASED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COMMITTEE TODAY TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT OF AIRCRAFT NOISE AT CANNON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE JOHN MATTSON, WHO IS DIRECTOR OF THE FAA'S WESTERN REGION WHICH INCLUDES THE STATE OF NEVADA.

THE FAA HAS LONG HAD AN INTEREST IN REDUCING AIRCRAFT NOISE AND, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE CONGRESS, WE HAVE TAKEN A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT STEPS - BOTH REGULATORILY AND OPERATIONALLY - TO LESSEN THE IMPACT OF AIRCRAFT NOISE ON AIRPORT NEIGHBORS.

THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION HAS HAD THE PRIMARY FEDERAL AUTHORITY FOR THE CONTROL OF AIRCRAFT NOISE AND SONIC BOOM SINCE 1968 WHEN THE CONGRESS ADDED A NEW PROVISION (SECTION 611) TO THE FEDERAL AVIATION ACT OF 1958. PURSUANT TO THAT AUTHORITY, THE FAA HAS FOLLOWED A PROGRESSIVE, DELIBERATE PROGRAM TO CONTROL AIRCRAFT NOISE. THE FIRST ASPECT OF THAT PROGRAM HAS REDUCED AIRCRAFT NOISE AT ITS SOURCE--THE AIRPLANE ITSELF. IN 1969, THE FAA ISSUED NOISE STANDARDS FOR NEW DESIGNS OF TURBOJET AND TRANSPORT CATEGORY AIRCRAFT, LIMITING THE LEVEL OF NOISE WHICH NEW DESIGNS COULD CREATE IN ORDER TO

BE CERTIFICATED. THUS, NEW AIRCRAFT SUCH AS THE 747, DC-10, AND L-1011 ARE SUBSTANTIALLY QUIETER THAN THE OLDER 707 AND DC-8 MODELS WHICH THEY REPLACED.

IN 1973, FAA EXTENDED THOSE SAME NOISE STANDARDS TO NEW AIRPLANES COMING OFF THE PRODUCTION LINES, EVEN THOUGH APPROVAL OF THOSE AIRCRAFT DESIGNS PREDATED THE 1969 RULE. THUS, THE OLDER-DESIGN 727, 737, AND DC-9 MODELS WHICH HAVE BEEN PRODUCED SINCE 1973 HAVE ALL MET THE 1969 NOISE STANDARDS. IN 1976, FAA NEXT EXTENDED THOSE SAME NOISE STANDARDS TO ALL AIRCRAFT, RETROACTIVELY, AS A CONDITION FOR OPERATION IN THE UNITED STATES. THAT LIMITATION IS BEING IMPOSED GRADUALLY OVER AN EIGHT-YEAR PERIOD, AND WITH LIMITED EXCEPTIONS IT WILL BECOME FULLY EFFECTIVE IN 1985. IN THIS MANNER, OLDER, NOISIER AIRCRAFT ARE NOW BEING PHASED OUT OF OPERATION IN THIS COUNTRY. INCIDENTLY, I SHOULD NOTE THAT THE EARLIER REGULATION IN 1976 AFFECTED ONLY DOMESTIC OPERATIONS, REQUIRING A PHASED COMPLIANCE WITH THE NOISE STANDARDS BY 1985. SIGNIFICANTLY, AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR, OVER 48% OF THE U.S. AIR CARRIER FLEET MET THESE STANDARDS. LAST YEAR, THE REGULATION WAS FURTHER AMENDED TO INCLUDE INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS, SO THAT, BY 1985, WITH LIMITED EXCEPTIONS, ALL AIRCRAFT--BOTH FOREIGN AND U.S.--OPERATING IN THE UNITED STATES WILL MEET OUR NOISE STANDARDS.

IN 1977, THE FAA BEGAN THIS CYCLE OF NOISE CONTROL ANEW, BY MAKING THE NOISE STANDARDS FOR NEW DESIGN AIRCRAFT MORE STRINGENT--BY REQUIRING THE SO-CALLED STAGE 3 NOISE LIMITS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF TURBOJET AIRCRAFT. AS A RESULT, THE NEW BOEING 757 AND 767 AIRCRAFT WILL BE STILL QUIETER, AND WILL PROVIDE ADDED RELIEF FOR CITIZENS WHO LIVE AROUND OUR COUNTRY'S AIRPORTS.

TO COMPLEMENT REDUCTIONS OF NOISE AT THE SOURCE--THE AIRPLANE--THE FAA HAS ALSO ACTED TO CONTROL THE MANNER IN WHICH AIRCRAFT ARE OPERATED TO FURTHER MINIMIZE NOISE IMPACTS. AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL IS A PRIMARY FAA RESPONSIBILITY, AND WE HAVE USED THAT RESPONSIBILITY TO REQUIRE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT MINIMUM FLAPS BE EMPLOYED DURING APPROACHES FOR LANDING, IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH SAFETY. TAKEOFF OPERATING PROCEDURES ARE ALSO ADJUSTED TO MINIMIZE NOISE IMPACTS, AGAIN WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS OF SAFE OPERATION. LOCALLY, AIR TRAFFIC PATTERNS ARE TAILORED TO MINIMIZE NOISE IMPACTS ON NEARBY RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

DESPITE CONTROL OF THE AIRPLANE NOISE ITSELF AND THE MANNER IN WHICH AIRPLANES ARE FLOWN, HOWEVER, AIRCRAFT NOISE WILL NOT BE ELIMINATED. AIRPLANES WILL NEVER BE SILENT, AND THERE WILL UNFORTUNATELY REMAIN RESIDUAL NOISE IMPACTS AROUND OUR

AIRPORTS, EVEN AS QUIETER AIRCRAFT MODELS BECOME MORE DOMINANT IN THE FLEET. THESE RESIDUAL IMPACTS CAN ONLY BE CONTROLLED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE FAA HAVE LONG RECOGNIZED THIS ASPECT OF AVIATION NOISE CONTROL. IN THE AVIATION NOISE ABATEMENT POLICY, ISSUED JOINTLY BY THE DEPARTMENT AND THE FAA IN 1976, THE SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES FOR AVIATION NOISE ABATEMENT WERE ENUNCIATED. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR LIMITING THE NOISE OF INDIVIDUAL AIRCRAFT, FOR CONTROLLING HOW THEY ARE FLOWN, FOR SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INTO BETTER NOISE REDUCTION TECHNOLOGY AND PRACTICES, AND FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO THE INDUSTRY TO ENCOURAGE NOISE ABATEMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE AIRPORT OPERATOR BEARS RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONTROLLING THE USE OF AN AIRPORT. FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS THE AIRPORT OPERATOR WHO DECIDES TO OPERATE AN AIRPORT, WHERE IT SHOULD BE LOCATED, HOW MUCH LAND IT SHOULD CONTROL, HOW MANY RUNWAYS IT SHOULD HAVE AND HOW THEY SHOULD BE ORIENTED, AND WHAT TYPE OF AIR SERVICE IS TO BE PROVIDED. THE OPERATOR IS FREE TO IMPOSE USE RESTRICTIONS AT AN AIRPORT, IN TERMS, FOR EXAMPLE, OF HOURS OF OPERATION AND TYPES OF AIRCRAFT PERMITTED TO OPERATE THERE. IN IMPLEMENTING SUCH RESTRICTIONS, HOWEVER, THE OPERATOR MUST ENSURE THAT THEY

ARE APPLIED NONDISCRIMINATORILY, DO NOT IMPOSE AN UNDUE BURDEN ON INTERSTATE OR FOREIGN COMMERCE, DO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL NOISE RELIEF, AND, OF COURSE, DO NOT IMPOSE ON AVIATION SAFETY OR AREAS PREEMPTED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

WITH THIS GENERAL BACKGROUND, I WOULD LIKE TO TURN NOW TO THE SITUATION AT CANNON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, HERE IN RENO.

CANNON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IS A MEDIUM-HUB AIRPORT, OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE AIRPORT AUTHORITY OF WASHOE COUNTY. IT ENPLANED APPROXIMATELY 1,366,000 PASSENGERS IN 1979, RANKING 45TH AMONG U.S. AIRPORTS, IN THAT CATEGORY. IT HANDLED ABOUT 185,000 AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS INCLUDING SOME 43,500 AIR CARRIER OPERATIONS. IT ALSO SUPPORTS THE 152ND TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE GROUP OF THE NEVADA AIR NATIONAL GUARD, WHICH OPERATES RF-4 PHANTOM JETS. THE CITY OF SPARKS IS LOCATED IMMEDIATELY TO THE NORTH OF THE AIRPORT, RENO TO THE WEST, AND THE COMMUNITIES OF DONNER SPRINGS, HUFFAKER HILLS, SOUTH HILLS, AND OTHERS TO THE SOUTH AND EAST. PARTS OF THESE COMMUNITIES LIE UNDER THE MAIN FLIGHT TRACKS, ESPECIALLY TO THE LONGER RUNWAY 16/34, AND BECAUSE OF THEIR PROXIMITY TO THE AIRPORT, RECEIVE A SUBSTANTIAL EXPOSURE TO AIRCRAFT NOISE. THE AIRPORT MANAGEMENT HAS IMPOSED A NUMBER OF AIRPORT RESTRICTIONS IN AN EFFORT TO LIMIT THESE NOISE IMPACTS, INCLUDING LIMITATIONS OF

TOUCH-AND-GO TRAINING DURING WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS AND AT NIGHT, AND BY PROHIBITING MIDFIELD DEPARTURES BY TWIN-ENGINE AIRCRAFT. THE NEVADA AIR NATIONAL GUARD HAS ALSO BEEN SENSITIVE TO NOISE PROBLEMS, AND HAS ACTED TO LIMIT NOISE FROM ITS OPERATIONS WHEREVER POSSIBLE. NEVERTHELESS, NOISE PROBLEMS EXIST.

LAST NOVEMBER, AT THE REQUEST OF SENATOR CANNON, I SPENT SEVERAL DAYS IN RENO TALKING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL GROUPS AS WELL AS LOCAL FAA AND AIRPORT OFFICIALS, OBSERVING THE AIRPORT'S OPERATING ENVIRONMENT, AND LOOKING TO SEE WHAT STEPS COULD FEASIBLY BE TAKEN TO AMELIORATE THE NOISE PROBLEMS AT THIS AIRPORT. I SHOULD ADD THAT THE DIRECTOR OF THE FAA WESTERN REGION, JOHN MATTSON, HAS TAKEN A PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE NOISE PROBLEMS HERE, AND HE AND HIS STAFF HAVE DEVOTED SUBSTANTIAL TIME AND EFFORT TO EASING THOSE PROBLEMS. WE FOUND THAT THE NOISE PROBLEMS HAVE INCREASED IN THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS LARGELY BECAUSE OF ADDED COMMERCIAL SERVICE INTO RENO. RECENT FIGURES I HAVE SEEN, THOUGH, HAVE SHOWN SOME DROP-OFF IN TRAFFIC THIS YEAR. NOISE PROBLEMS HAVE ALSO BEEN AGGRAVATED AS INCREASED PRESSURES FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT HAVE ADDED NEW HOUSING CONSTRUCTION NEAR THE AIRPORT. ONE EXAMPLE OF THE INCREASED DEVELOPMENT NEAR THE AIRPORT IS HUFFAKER HILLS, WHICH

IS LOCATED LESS THAN TWO MILES FROM THE END OF THE PRIMARY RUNWAY ON THE RUNWAY CENTERLINE EXTENDED. THE SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES THERE ARE THREE TO FIVE YEARS OLD, AND MORE ARE NOW BEING CONSTRUCTED.

AT THE TIME OF MY VISIT, THE FAA HAD ALREADY UNDERTAKEN A SIGNIFICANT EFFORT TO REVISE THE FLIGHT TRACKS FOR THE AIRPORT. THAT ACTION REPRESENTS A POSITIVE STEP WHICH WILL REDUCE THE NUMBERS OF PERSONS CURRENTLY EXPOSED TO SUBSTANTIAL NOISE. WITH YOUR PERMISSION, MR. CHAIRMAN, THE FAA TOWER CHIEF AT CANNON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, MR. ED ARRI, WILL DESCRIBE THE AIR TRAFFIC CHANGES FOLLOWING MY PREPARED STATEMENT.

THE FAA'S WESTERN REGION HAS ALSO BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN SEEKING LOCAL COOPERATION, AND IN WORKING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NOISE ABATEMENT COMMITTEE FOR THE AIRPORT. THAT COMMITTEE HELD ITS FIRST FORMAL MEETING LAST MONTH, AND I BELIEVE IT SHOWS GREAT PROMISE IN DEALING WITH THE LOCAL PROBLEMS. COMMITTEES SUCH AS THIS ONE HAVE BEEN QUITE EFFECTIVE AT OTHER AIRPORTS, SUCH AS MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL AND SEATTLE, IN ADDRESSING LOCAL AIRPORT NOISE PROBLEMS. I BELIEVE SENATOR CANNON HAS PROVIDED NEEDED IMPETUS FOR THESE POSITIVE ACTIONS. CERTAINLY THROUGH

BETTER LOCAL COMMUNICATIONS AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMPLEX PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH AIRPORT OPERATIONS AND NOISE, LOCAL DIFFERENCES AND ANTAGONISMS SHOULD BE EASED.

IN ADDITION TO THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE FAA, I BELIEVE THERE IS A NEED FOR LOCAL ACTION IF NOISE PROBLEMS ARE TO BE FURTHER REDUCED. SERIOUS CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO CONTROLS OF NONCOMPATIBLE LAND USES AROUND THE AIRPORT, AND, PERHAPS, SOME FORM OF USE RESTRICTIONS AT THE AIRPORT.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THAT COMPLETES MY PREPARED STATEMENT. I WOULD BE PLEASED TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE AT THIS TIME.