

July 9, 2002

Mr. Michael Cheston. Executive Director

Rhode Island Airport Corporation

T.F. Green Airport

Dear Mr. Cheston:

I received your e-mailed response to my request to extend the SRC process so that we may adequately consider our environmental problems within the planning process. Thank you for making clear your "full disagreement" to my request to continue the deliberations of the SRC. I must say, however, that if what you say is true, that this "SRC process has been the most open and public of it's kind in the country", then shame on the FAA for tolerating such poor planning and hasty decision-making.

I am disappointed that you are so upset by my reasonable request for additional due diligence. I do not believe, as you clearly do, that my statements about "RIAC misleading the public" are either: "outrageous" nor "untrue". I would cite a few specific examples to help clarify my own perspective and cause for concern:

1. On February 18, 2002, in response to a formal presentation from the SRC Quality of Life Subcommittee, you claimed in writing that RIAC's restrictive deed easements, (required as a condition before citizens experiencing hardship from the airport's operations could receive federally financed sound insulation relief), were not only a requirement of FAA, but had been recently tightened by FAA. At my request as President of Concerned Airport Neighborhoods (C.A.N.), U.S. Senator Jack Reed was subsequently able to have FAA confirm that this was untrue. FAA does not, and never has, in fact, required any restrictive deed easements of citizens receiving federally financed sound insulation. FAA stated that, contrary to your claims, "FAA views the other restrictive easements, such as, 'dust, fumes, and particles' as strictly an initiative being pursued by RIAC." To date you have apparently done nothing to return these deed easements obtained under false pretenses to their rightful owners. Furthermore, you have never publicly apologized on behalf of RIAC for this "misunderstanding".
2. In a letter to U.S. Senator Reed dated March 1, 2002, you personally made the following statement regarding these overly restrictive deed easements: "The referenced language has been used since 1997 without any major concerns being raised, with the exception of Mr. Jenkins". This, again, is categorically untrue. To date, you have not so much as apologized to me for your misrepresentation of my position, nor to those individuals who refused to receive their insulation relief solely because of RIAC's insistence on obtaining these deed easements as a condition.
3. RIAC had consistently claimed to the people on Fieldview Drive, who live closest to the direct exhaust of taxiing and idling planes, that they were last on the list to be relocated because FAA required 10 years before homes that had been insulated with federal funds could be purchased with federal funds. We recently discovered this, too, is not true. To date, you have apparently done nothing to immediately remove these people out of harm's way.

I could go on, but suffice it to say that if anyone should be "outraged" it is the airport-affected citizens who have been misled by yourself and RIAC. Your own indignation appears out of place and contrived under these circumstances.

I am not anti-airport, never have been, and have consistently agreed that T.F.Green is an undeniable asset. It is far from a complete success, however. While it contributes to Warwick's economy in some areas, it poses a very real threat to Warwick's quality of life in other areas. It still needs to be properly sized for its location in the heart of a residential land use area in the second largest city in the State.

While I appreciate your timely response to my request for an extension of the SRC process and a postponement of the FAA EIS, your hasty and heavy handed response is disappointing. I would note that you did not address the specific concerns I had expressed regarding the apparent failure of this master plan to fully consider the full spectrum of environmental concerns within the planning process itself. According to FAA's own guidelines, a master plan, not an EIS, is the most appropriate stage at which to study and address environmental problems. An EIS is designed to consider expansion considerations. It is conceivable that if we properly considered and completely addressed existing environmental concerns in the master planning process we might not even require any expensive EIS at this time. I am most concerned about the potential risk of wasting federal dollars needlessly.

You have made your personal/professional position perfectly clear within your written response to me. However, under the circumstances, I would appreciate a second and third opinion. I respectfully request to hear from the RIAC board, which is responsible and liable for major decision-making by your corporation, and our Federal legislators, who are responsible for overseeing federal processes that involve federal taxpayer money, before you attempt to hastily and unilaterally table my reasonable request for additional time and study.

To this end, I would propose that this matter be openly discussed at the next SRC meeting. I, like you, have made my position perfectly clear. We should at least see what the other stakeholders, concerned citizens and federal overseers have to say about this matter.

Sincerely,

Raleigh M. Jenkins

SRC At-Large Citizen Representative

Democratic Mayoral Candidate, City of Warwick