

## TACA Report on Aviation Issues

**Summary of TACA Recommendations:** TACA recommends that the Commission add to its annual report the upcoming issues identified in the attached TACA report and summarized below.

TACA recommends that the Commission recommend to the Legislature and the Administration that they:

- act to address state aviation system needs through legislation that would provide a stable funding source from the aviation jet fuel sales tax for the Aeronautics Account. The Commission would program and allocate the funds to publicly-owned general aviation airports and air carrier public use airports for airport security, safety, capacity needs and comprehensive land use compatibility plans.
- should inform the California Congressional delegation of the need to maintain and increase the federal funding, including appropriations, for aeronautics in the next re-authorization.

TACA recommends that the Commission direct it to work in 2009 with representatives of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency and the Department to:

- identify potential roles and policies for the State in developing California's aviation system.
- support appropriate legislative proposals that would:
  - 1) dedicate the Aeronautics Account revenues derived from the existing aviation fuel excise tax and the potential set-aside of a portion of future general aviation jet fuel sales tax for aviation purposes.
  - 2) increase funding for Caltrans to assist smaller airports in securing state and federal aviation grants, to ensure that California receives the maximum amount of federal funding and uses states funds effectively for planning and matching fund purposes.
  - 3) update, as necessary, the California Public Utilities Code sections 21670 through 21679 to further solidify and strengthen airport land use law to preclude and prevent incompatible land use around airports.
  - 4) amend current statute to allow local agencies to request Commission approval for an agency to use its own funds, to advance funding for the required match of a Federal Airport Improvement Program grant with the promise for later repayment by the State.
  - 5) authorize and fund the Caltrans Division of Aeronautics to provide information to pilots and business aviation departments to promote the use of a larger number of California's airports and use more efficiently the existing system capacity. Existing and newly upgraded facilities often are not used to their potential. Caltrans could help to manage both highway congestion and runway congestion by marketing alternatives to congested airports that are within a convenient distance of major

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business destinations, especially in light of the growth of air taxi services using small very light jets (VLJs).

**Background:** If California is to remain competitive in the global economy, its aviation system must:

- be improved to facilitate significant growth in air passenger and air cargo movement,
- provide ground access for and fully integrate increasing freight, business and corporate aviation into the statewide transportation system by having the State and local jurisdictions plan and/or provide highway and arterials in corridors to and from public airports,
- prevent adverse community impacts caused by aviation by having guidelines in place to provide more protection to airports from incompatible land uses and development, and
- continue a high quality of life for our citizens by integrating land use, transportation and housing, while adhering to established California noise and planning standards for airports.

California cannot meet these goals for its aviation system if it continues to leave aviation decision-making to the unpredictable nature of local politics and priorities alone. The State should take responsibility – in cooperation with local, regional, and federal agencies – for providing the leadership and resources needed to develop the aviation system essential to our economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. California must continually assess its role in aviation to ensure that California remains competitive in the global economy.

## **TACA Report on Aviation Issues Outlook for the State Aeronautics Program**

The rapidly expanding role of aviation in moving people and goods in the global economy requires the State to act proactively to position itself as a practical and accessible region for commercial and business aviation use. California's economic future depends upon efficient air and surface transportation infrastructure that will connect all areas of the State to the global economy. If California is to remain competitive in the global economy, its aviation system must:

- be improved to facilitate significant growth in air passenger and air cargo movement,
- provide ground access for and fully integrate increasing freight, business and corporate aviation into the statewide transportation system by having the State and local jurisdictions plan and/or provide highway and arterials in corridors to and from public airports,
- prevent adverse community impacts caused by aviation by having guidelines in place to provide more protection to airports from incompatible land uses and development, and
- continue a high quality of life for our citizens by integrating land use, transportation and housing, while adhering to established California noise and planning standards for airports.

California cannot meet these goals for its aviation system if it continues to leave aviation decision-making to the unpredictable nature of local politics and priorities alone. The State should take responsibility – in cooperation with local, regional and federal agencies – for providing the leadership and support needed to develop the aviation system essential to our economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. California must continually assess its role in aviation to ensure that California remains competitive in the global economy.

### **Aviation Planning**

The policy element of the California Aviation System Plan (CASP), adopted in 2005, defines the State's continuous aviation system planning process. The policy element defines the roles of federal, State, regional and local participants in the process. It covers issues affecting aviation and aviation's relationship with other modes. The policy element also defines the policies and implementing actions for guiding Caltrans Division of Aeronautics activities and CASP development, including funding priorities for general aviation and air carrier public use airports in California.

The Caltrans role in aviation consists of planning and assisting with the development of infrastructure capacity improvements and the maintenance of the airport system. For several years, the CASP policy element has emphasized how funding limitations restrict Caltrans' role, while also proposing options for increased funding of the State aviation program.

The Commission's role, in addition to providing advice to the Legislature and to the Secretary of Business, Transportation and Housing, is to provide policy direction to Caltrans in the

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development of the aeronautics plans and programs, adopt the CASP and its various elements, program projects in the Aeronautics Program, and allocate funds.

### **Existing State Aviation Funding**

The State Aeronautics Account represents the sole State source of funding for the Division of Aeronautics and the programs it administers. Revenue sources for the Aeronautics Account include an 18-cent per gallon motor vehicle fuel excise tax on general aviation gasoline and a two-cent per gallon excise tax on general aviation jet fuel. Air Carrier, military aircraft and aviation manufacturing are exempt from the two-cent per gallon excise tax on jet fuel. The annual revenue transferred by the State Controller's Office (SCO) into the State Aeronautics Account has steadily decreased. In fact, the highest transfer of \$8.4 million occurred in Fiscal Year (FY) 1990-00 and since then it has declined steadily. In FY 2005-06, the SCO reported a transfer of \$7.4 million into the State Aeronautics Account, the lowest transfer since FY 1992-93. Although increased general aviation jet fuel sales have helped slow the decline, the downward trend continues. The State Aeronautics Account will continue to decrease until another funding source comes on line.

*[Note: Division of Aeronautics needs to provide latest info regarding general aviation revenues.]*

The commission has long supported increasing state funding to develop an integrated system of airports that adequately meets the demands of California's economy. The Commission supports redirecting a portion of state sales tax revenues from the sale of general aviation jet fuel to fund state aviation programs. These tax revenues are a "user fee" paid by the aviation industry and users, in the same way that sales tax revenues on gasoline and diesel fuel, currently directed to highway and transit program funding, are user fees on drivers.

If the Legislature and the Administration were to establish a percentage transfer from the general aviation jet fuel sales tax from the State General Fund to the State Aeronautics Account as a set minimum, it would establish a stable baseline of aviation funding. Since the State Aeronautics Account is declining, an annual baseline minimum would provide some of the resources to develop a program to meet future aviation needs. California could make significant progress in implementing state priorities for increasing airport capacity and safety, security, enhancing air passenger mobility, improving air cargo efficiency, mitigating the impacts of airport operations on local communities, and mitigating the impacts of land use encroachment on airport operations.

### **Federal Re-authorization of Vision 100**

Vision 100, Century of flight Authorization Act of 2003, is a four-year statute that lapsed September 2007. Congress is considering the re-authorization of vision 100, while passing a series of continuing resolutions to maintain the status quo. The act provides funding for the Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Improvement Program. These revenues are

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extremely important for the overall preservation and enhancement of California's Public Use Airport System. Nationwide the annual authorized AIP funding levels were:

### **Annual AIP Funding Levels:**

Federal FY 2004 - \$3.4 billion  
Federal FY 2005 - \$3.5 billion  
Federal FY 2006 - \$3.6 billion  
Federal FY 2007 - \$3.7 billion

California typically receives around 8 to 10 percent of the funds appropriated. Over the past several years, the federal administration has proposed smaller appropriations than the authorized levels for the AIP program, including General Aviation Airport Entitlements, and the Small Community Air Service Development Program. The trend towards smaller appropriations could mean a smaller re-authorization, which would negatively impact the funding for nearly 200 of California's general aviation airports. The Legislature and Governor should inform the California Congressional delegation of the need to maintain and increase the federal funding, including appropriations, for aeronautics in the next re-authorization.

The Next Generation Air Transportation System Financing Reform Act of 2007 (NextGen) was introduced in February 2007 by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) laying out the Administration's vision for meeting the challenges of transforming the aviation system to handle future demand. The Administration's proposal included fundamental changes to the funding structure of the FAA and the services it provides.

The changes, according to the FAA proposal, would:

- Generate revenue based on the air traffic system, whether it is commercial, business, or general aviation
- Create a stable, cost-based revenue structure combined with flexible capital financing.
- Maintain a continued general fund contribution for services provided by the FAA.
- Provide up to \$5 billion in Treasury debt financing authority beginning in FY 2013 to support NextGen-related capital needs and accelerate the transition to NextGen.
- Allow airports to more effectively meet their needs through an expansion of the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) program and reform of its outdated regulations.
- Authorize the use of congestion pricing or actions to more effectively allocate scarce resources at congested airports, reducing delays and maximizing passenger throughput.
- Support a cleaner, quieter, and more energy efficient future for aviation through initiatives that support enhanced stewardship of our natural resources.

*[Note: updated information to be provided by the Division of Aeronautics.]*

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## **Continuing Aeronautics Issues**

The Commission, based on proposals from its Technical Advisory Committee on Aeronautics (TACA), recommends that the Legislature and the Administration act to address state aviation system needs through legislation that would provide a stable funding source of about \$9 million per year from the aviation jet fuel sales tax for the Aeronautics Account. The Commission would program and allocate the funding to publicly owned general aviation airports and air carrier public use airports for activities addressing airport safety/security, capacity needs, and needed studies such as economic and land use studies, and comprehensive land use compatibility plans to enhance the capacity and capability of those airports. The chart below shows the estimated five-year need by category.

*[Note: to be updated by Division of Aeronautics, if necessary]*

At the Commission's direction, TACA will work in 2008 with representatives of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency and the Department to:

- identify potential roles and policies for the State in developing California's aviation system.
- support appropriate legislative proposals that would:
  - 1) dedicate the Aeronautics Account revenues derived from the existing aviation fuel excise tax and the potential set-aside of a portion future general aviation jet fuel sales tax for aviation purposes.
  - 2) increase funding for Caltrans to assist smaller airports in securing state and federal aviation grants, to ensure that California receives the maximum amount of federal funding and uses state funds effectively for planning and matching fund purposes.
  - 3) update the California Public Utilities code sections 21670 through 21679, as necessary, to further solidify and strengthen airport land use law to preclude and prevent incompatible land use around airports.
  - 4) amend current statute to allow local agencies to request Commission approval for an agency to use its own funds, to advance funding for the required match of a Federal Airport Improvement Program grant with the promise for later repayment by the State.
- authorize and fund the Caltrans Division of Aeronautics to provide information to pilots and business aviation departments to promote the use of a larger number of California's airports and use more efficiently the existing system capacity. Existing and newly upgraded facilities often are not used to their potential. Caltrans could help to manage both highway congestion and runway congestion by marketing alternatives to congested airports that are within a convenient distance of major business destinations, especially in light of the growth of air taxi services using small very light jets (VLJs).

## **TACA Report on Aviation Issues Outlook for the State Aeronautics Program**

- continue working on the following “Focus Points” identified by TACA as important to its on-going efforts to support California aviation and properly advise the Commission:
  - 1) Communicate to CTC and others the importance of Division of Aeronautics and Aeronautics CIP funding
  - 2) Support goals/mission of CTC and Aero Division (e.g. review/input draft California Airports Best Practices Guide, currently under development, review/input draft CASP System Requirements Element, review/input ALUC information and education materials)
  - 3) Solicit/receive input from stakeholders re: needs which can be addressed at the State level (e.g. update requirements for ALUC handbook, participation in State stakeholders summit, possible direct communication protocol with ACA, SWAAAE)
  - 4) Support legislative efforts to strengthen ALUC process (Code 21670 – 21679)
  - 5) Identify/track aviation/airport dynamics on a looking forward basis, and identify related State-level interests/responsibilities – possibly in the form of recommendations for updating the CASP System Requirements Element (e.g. increasing importance of reliever/regional airports in light of hub airport capacity constraints, population dispersal, opportunities provided by military base reuse, air travel infrastructure needs associated with VLJs, and other evolving trends)
  - 6) Track, and recommend State involvement where appropriate, in evolving areas with potential airport impacts, such as aviation safety and security (e.g. DHS initiatives re: GA, air quality initiatives impacting GA, runway safety initiatives, etc.)
  - 7) Support Division of Aeronautics activity to promote use of alternate airports for GA, cargo, air taxi, etc, for enhanced system capacity (e.g. identify ground access needs, recommend enhancements to state-level marketing/promotion of these airports, including working with AOPA, NBAA, packaging/distribution of available local airport's marketing pieces, modifications to CTC and Caltrans/DOA websites to more directly reference GA, GA airports, and their importance in meeting evolving transportation needs).