

March 18, 2004

Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission
701 Ocean St. Room 318-D
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Members of LAFCO,

On behalf of over 150 members of the Watsonville Pilots Association, I am responding to a recent statement by Randy Repass, the founder of Action Pajaro Valley, who stated in essence that "if pilots did not agree to closing runway 8-26 then the whole airport would be closed".

The Watsonville Pilots Association (WPA) requests assurances from LAFCO that state airport land use planning laws are complied with in the area surrounding Watsonville Airport. LAFCO can provide this assurance by making annexation of any land around the airport conditional upon the implementation of the Watsonville Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (the WALUC Plan). General Aviation users need this assurance of permanent protection from non-conforming development in zones around the Airport.

Compliance with state law provides for this protection. State Law Section 21670 requires land use planning. The California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook (January 2002) defines land use planning. The WALUC Plan complies with the Handbook. Members of LAFCO have been provided copies of the WALUC Plan.

The national Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), California Pilots Association (CPA), Watsonville Pilots Association (WPA), and the Watsonville Regional Airport Promotion (WRAP) PAC support the belief that any development surrounding Watsonville Airport must comply with and be protected by the provisions of state laws. EAA Chapter 119 and the National Business Aircraft Association (NBAA) also support this belief. These organizations are not going to allow closure of runways that are needed for utility and safety. This is not just a local issue since the airport is used by aircraft travelers from all over the United States and Canada, Mexico, and other countries.

The Airport is an irreplaceable transportation and commerce resource. A recent article in the Register-Pajaronian newspaper reported on the new AMBAG study indicating that the Watsonville Airport involved 1600 local jobs, and direct and indirect economic benefits of \$662,000,000 per year. **By taking the above requested action LAFCO could protect the Watsonville Airport, promote responsible land use planning, require compliance with state laws, provide continued economic benefit to the region and lessen the chance of future litigation.**

Sincerely,
WATSONVILLE PILOTS ASSOCIATION

Richard Lippi
President

Cc: Don French, Airport Manager; Jay White, President, California Pilots Assn; President, NBAA