

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 18, 2007

Ms. Marion C. Blakey
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Blakey,

Our purpose in writing is to express our concern with the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) planned consolidation of radar functions at the Palm Springs Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) into the Southern California (SoCal) TRACON, as well as efforts to cease some evening terminal services at Palm Springs and relocate them to Los Angeles Air Traffic Control Center (Los Angeles Center). This proposal could serve to exacerbate the understaffing issues at both the SoCal TRACON and Los Angeles facilities, resulting in reductions in services at numerous airports across the southern California region and unnecessary risks to the flying public. We urge you to further examine consolidation efforts so that we can ensure safety and address staffing needs where pertinent.

The Agency has pledged to Members of the California Congressional Delegation that there would be no reduction in services to the region. We now understand that the Agency plans to transfer terminal services from Palm Springs to the short-staffed Los Angeles Center. Furthermore, the FAA is currently planning to move the radar functions from the Palm Springs TRACON to the SoCal TRACON, a facility that is currently operating with 73 controllers less than they are federally authorized, while at the same time reducing radar services to the users of Palm Springs. This is not staffing to traffic, but rather staffing to budget, and surely no passenger taking a trip nor pilot flying these skies would want a reduction in these critical services.

As you know, the airspace in the Southern California region is among the busiest in the nation, and SoCal TRACON handles 2.2 million operations per year. At the same time, the facility is operating with only 188 of its authorized 261 controllers. In our opinion, it is no coincidence that the number of operational errors at the SoCal TRACON has increased from eight in 2004 to twenty-two in 2006 – a remarkable 300 percent increase.

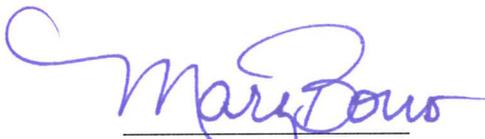
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Merging radar functions from Palm Springs will add an additional 220,000 operations into the already thinly-stretched SoCal TRACON, further complicating the airspace, burdening overworked controllers, and increasing the chances for operational errors. Terminating consolidation plans and instead focusing on increasing controller staffing levels at these two vital FAA facilities is a better approach to ensuring the continued safety of our constituents who are served by SoCal TRACON and LA Center.

At this time, we have questions about the ramifications of what may happen as a result of the proposed transfer. Will it result in specific changes to the Palm Springs facility as it relates to staffing or will staffing augmentation be considered for the other facilities that will take on the new operations?

Thank you for taking the time to address our concerns. We look forward to your timely response and working with you on this matter of significant importance to the flying public of southern California.

Sincerely,



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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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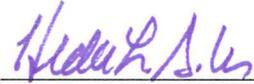
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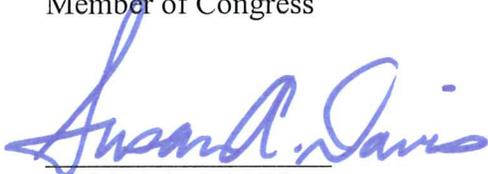
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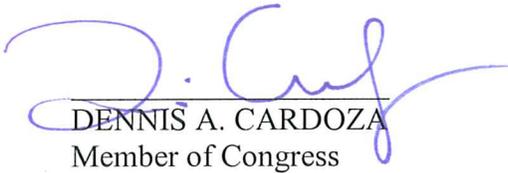


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