

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has responded to the 52-page, 31-exhibit petition jointly submitted last winter by our grass roots Committee for Preserving Community Quality and Pittsfield Township to block the expansion of the Ann Arbor Municipal Airport, saying the DOT and Federal Aviation Administration were "actively reviewing" our petition. We are delighted that the federal government is actively reviewing our petition at the cabinet level in Washington.

In advising us on the status of the petition in August, DOT-FAA said they were "continuing to address a number of substantive and procedural issues" raised in our petition" and that they expect to provide a "substantive response" to our petition by the end of this calendar year. This response came from the FAA associate administrator of airports, who oversees all of the country's 6,000+airports -- from O'Hare, LAX, and JFK, down to Ann Arbor.

Among other things, our petition asks that the Ann Arbor expansion be blocked outright, that the current standard of an Environment Assessment (EA) be raised to the much more rigorous Environmental Impact Statement before any expansion can move forward, and that no expansion of the runway take place unless Pittsfield agrees.

The FAA has said it will rule formally on the petition if and when the Ann Arbor City Council votes to proceed with the airport expansion project.

Meanwhile, the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on the airport expansion, prepared by Ann Arbor to meet federal requirements in February 2010, has exceeded the three-year time limit established by the FAA for such draft documents. Although \$436,500 in taxpayer funds have already been spent on the EA and it is still not completed because of remaining questions from the FAA, under FAA regulations, now a written reevaluation of the draft must be prepared. We are still waiting for the EA to be revised and finalized.