

LANL

TA-73

Darlene Goering

From: Will Fox [wefox@lanl.gov]
Sent: Monday, April 12, 2004 5:13 PM
To: Darlene_Goering@nmenv.state.nm.us
Cc: Dave Carrol; Dave Martin
Subject: DOE capping of Los Alamos airport landfill

Dear Darlene,

Dave Carol suggested that this might be useful information for you. It is a letter from our Airport Transportation Advisory Board to Donna Dreska the Los Alamos County Administrator and her Deputy Max Baker. I would be happy to discuss this further with you at your convenience.

Will Fox

Dear Donna and Max,

The Airport Transportation Advisory Board would like to make you aware of the safety concerns that we have regarding the the landfill capping project that DOE plans to undertake at the Los Alamos Airport. We would also like to make you aware of the airport operational implications associated with this project as well its potential financial impacts. Finally we would like to suggest an alternative for the County and DOE to discuss.

The 90% design presented to ATAB by Kyle Zimmerman at our monthly meeting on April 7, 2004 showed that DOE is planning to pull landfill debris from the east face of the landfill and redistribute it over the remaining portion of the landfill adjacent to the taxiway and eastern edge of the hangers. This redistribution will create a berm adjacent to the taxiway that is several feet in height above the runway. This berm will represent a safety hazard for landing and departing aircraft at an airport. The berm will create additional turbulence over the runway when a northerly crosswind condition exists making landings and takeoffs more hazardous. The berm also represents an additional hazard to the pilots should they experience loss of directional control on landing or takeoff which is the single most prevalent type of aviation accident. This berm adds an unnecessary additional hazard to the airport which already has sufficient operational challenges associated with it.

The operational utility of the airport will be impacted by the planned DOE landfill capping project. Operational utility of the airport is strongly affected by crosswinds that produce turbulence over the runway. Aircraft can not land or takeoff when the turbulence exceeds either the pilots capability or the controllability of the aircraft. The planned berm on the North side of the airport will add to this turbulence for a given wind condition and thus lower the maximum crosswind that aircraft may be operated in at the airport. This will limit aircraft operations on days with winds from the north. A second operational issue is associated with the debris located in the path of the planned extension of the runway. The current DOE plan shows debris located in the path of the planned 600' runway extension. The extension of the runway is to allow higher performance jet aircraft to operate out of Los Alamos. If the runway cannot be extended as planned then the operational utility of the airport for higher performance jet aircraft will be limited. The runway cannot be placed on top of the debris due to insufficient structural integrity. The debris will have to be removed prior to the runway extension. This is not a large amount of debris and it should be relatively easy to relocate it during the DOE landfill capping project.



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The Los Alamos Airport Layout Plan approved by the County and the FAA shows the addition of several tie-downs and hanger rows to the east of the existing hangers on the North side of the airport. These tie-downs and hanger represent a significant potential revenue stream for the County in the range of \$50-\$100k/year. These tie-downs can not be built on the landfill as presently configured. This loss in revenue effectively increases the cost of operation of the airport to the County. Given that the County is incurring additional costs for the airport associated with inflation and improvements to the airport this is a very unfortunate development. Earlier discussions with DOE indicated that they were willing to work with the County to assure that the Landfill capping project allowed the planned tie-downs and hangers. Given that the County is incurring additional costs to operate the airport and the fact that DOE and LANL are principal users of the airport and that DOE has reduced their operational cost significantly by having the County operate the airport, it would seem that DOE should be very supportive of the County's interests in this area.

An alternative solution to these problems would be the following. DOE removed a significant portion of the old landfill to expand the airport apron and tie-down area on the west end of the airport a number of years ago. This material was moved to the east end of the airport and is now located in what is called the Debris Disposal Area Landfill, a part of which interferes with the planned runway extension. We suggest that this approach be used again and that the landfill material that is being removed from the canyon and the material located where the County plans to build hangers, be removed and placed on the east end of the airport, clear of the current and planned runway extension, but where the current grade is below the runway to the North and in the area of the future overrun area of the runway. The County can then work with the FAA to arrange for back fill of the area where they plan to locate hangers.

It is our hope that raising these concerns allows you to discuss them with DOE in a more educated and effective manner.

Sincerely
Dave Martin and Will Fox

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