

Testimony before the

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION  
OF THE U.S. HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Regarding  
“Economic Impact and Future Management of Ontario International Airport”

September 27, 2012

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Testimony of Ronald O. Loveridge, Mayor of the City of Riverside, California, and Board  
Member, Ontario International Airport Authority  
Before the Subcommittee on Aviation  
Of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
Regarding  
“Economic Impact and Future Management of Ontario International Airport”  
at Ontario, California  
September 27, 2012

Good afternoon members of the Aviation Subcommittee. My name is Ronald O. Loveridge. I am the Mayor of the City of Riverside and a Board Member of the Ontario International Airport Authority. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of transferring Ontario International Airport from the Los Angeles World Airports to the new Ontario International Airport Authority.

Ontario International Airport is a regional asset serving a large population covering four counties. It only makes sense that it be governed by an airport authority with region-wide representation and participation. I represent the interests of the tens of thousands of air travelers and the 2.2 million residents in Riverside County who have a vested interest in the success of Ontario International and the contribution it makes to our regional economy.

I am excited and honored to join the other Ontario International Airport Authority Board Members to work through the transfer of airport sponsorship from the City of Los Angeles. We are united in our commitment to the return of Ontario International Airport as a successful and integral part of the Southern California airport system.

In my 33 years of public service as a City of Riverside Council Member beginning in 1979 and Mayor since 1994, I have never seen western Riverside County come together to support a cause as it has on this transfer issue.

Overall, more than 125 local governments, public agencies, business and civic organizations, and elected officials have joined together to urge the transfer of Ontario International Airport from the City of Los Angeles to a new multi-jurisdictional agency dedicated to the airport's success.

Every city except one in western Riverside County (total of 13) have joined the City of Riverside in supporting the Set ONTario Free campaign. Likewise, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, Inland Empire Economic Partnership, Monday Morning and Inland Action, and Greater Riverside Chamber of Commerce have adopted and/or approved the same call. In addition, 46 cities in Los Angeles County, San Bernardino County and Orange County have taken formal action to join the coalition.

The overwhelming consensus is that Ontario International Airport will be managed, more efficiently and more effectively, through the governance structure created by the Ontario International Airport Authority. The dramatic, and continuing, loss of passengers explains and underscores why the City of Los Angeles should not control Ontario International Airport.

The editorial boards of most major newspapers in Los Angeles County, San Bernardino County and Riverside County considered the issue and have strongly supported transfer of Ontario International Airport to local control. SCAG, Southern California Association of Governments, has also taken this position.

After the Riverside City Council unanimously approved a resolution in support of the transfer of Ontario International Airport, I wrote a letter to the City of Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. I noted that our region had shared the pain of the recession with other cities across California and the nation, including the City of Los Angeles. I added that the economic difficulties in the inland region were compounded by the dramatic decrease in air service and passenger traffic at Ontario International Airport. These levels have not been seen since the 1980s!

I look to Mayor Villaraigosa to do the right thing for all of Southern California, by transferring Ontario International Airport to the Ontario International Airport Authority. This way, all of Southern California, including the City of Los Angeles, will have sufficient, sensibly priced, airport capacity well into the future.

In a LA Times article (August 20, 2012), Mayor Villaraigosa is quoted as saying, "This comprehensive report underscores the irrefutable importance of commercial aviation activity at LAX, and indeed throughout the Southern California region, on our economic well-being. From passenger spending to the enhancement of national and international trade, LAX and our region's other airports are uniquely where the action is." It is time for the action to also include the Ontario International Airport.

The City of Riverside and virtually all of Riverside County feel strongly that Ontario International Airport needs the full focus and the attention of an airport authority with a vested interest in the airport. The economic loss to our region during this period of drastic air service reductions is estimated at \$500 million annually and a loss of more than 9,200 jobs.

It only makes sense that returning Ontario International Airport to local control will put the airport in the hands of people who are ready to take responsibility, be accountable and assume the risk for our region's most vital economic engine.

With the Ontario International Airport Authority as the sponsor, Ontario International Airport will be on equal footing with other airports in Southern California, making it a competitive partner in the airport regionalization effort.

As the Riverside Press Enterprise indicated in a recent editorial, local control will eliminate the conflict of interest inherent with the City of Los Angeles controlling a competing airport, in another jurisdiction, at a time when LAX is rebuilding its own passenger traffic and renewing its infrastructure.

In December, I will be stepping down as Mayor of the City of Riverside. That does not mean I intend to retire from public service. Indeed, one of the things I am most looking forward to is serving as a Board Member of the Ontario International Airport Authority. I will dedicate my best efforts to ensuring that Ontario International Airport makes its expected, and important, contribution to the regional economy and to providing millions of Southern Californians with a convenient airport to meet their travel needs.

Thank you.

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