

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

Alan D. Wapner
Council Member
City of Ontario, California
and
Board Member
Ontario International Airport Authority

City of Ontario
City Hall
303 East "B" Street
Ontario, CA 91764
(909) 395-2011
awapner@ci.ontario.ca.us

Testimony of Alan D. Wapner, City Council Member, City of Ontario
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

Members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the City of Ontario and the newly formed Ontario International Airport Authority, welcome to Ontario. My name is Alan D. Wapner. I am a City Council Member for the City of Ontario and a Board Member of the new Ontario International Airport Authority. Thank you for holding this field hearing on this matter of critical importance to the Inland Empire and all of Southern California.

As a result of the declining conditions at Ontario International Airport and the region’s concerns about the airport’s ability to sustain commercial air traffic in the future, the Ontario City Council took action last month and formed the Ontario International Airport Authority. This new authority was formed through a Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Ontario and the County of San Bernardino.

Over the past two years, a compelling case has been made for why the City of Los Angeles should relinquish control of Ontario International Airport.

As I wrote in an Op-Ed in the Los Angeles Times, there are many reasons for Ontario to be placed under local control as governed by a multi-jurisdictional airport authority:

1. It allows Los Angeles World Airports, LAWA, to focus its energy and time on LAX for the benefit of the region’s economy as a whole.
2. It promotes regionalization by returning Ontario International Airport to local control, which is conducive to the development of robust regional airports.
3. It ensures all of Southern California, including Los Angeles, will have sufficient and affordable airport capacity. Without adequate capacity, airlines will be forced to land elsewhere.

This transfer will also protect the significant financial investment made into the Ontario Airport by the Federal government and the City of Ontario. Hundreds of millions of dollars to enhance Ontario Airport ground access and associated infrastructure have been accomplished through our fiduciary partnership. These multi-million dollar projects include grade separations, street widenings, interchange upgrades, radio system enhancements, landscaping, land use planning studies, water treatment systems, and noise mitigation programs. Inability of the Ontario Airport to support commercial air traffic will not only undermine the region’s air traffic strategy,

but will inevitably undermine federal, state and locally funded infrastructure investments designed to support Ontario Airport into the foreseeable future.

To prevent this disaster, just last week, Los Angeles City Administrative Officer Miguel Santana released his report on options for future management and control of ONT. We embrace his recommendation that the CAO facilitate negotiations between LAWA, the City of Ontario, the County of San Bernardino, the Ontario International Airport Authority, and other primary stakeholders to determine the most effective and appropriate ownership and management alternative for the airport. All of Southern California, including Los Angeles, will be better served by the transfer of Ontario Airport to the Ontario International Airport Authority.

It is our intent that negotiations with the City of Los Angeles result in a transfer that is a win for all parties and is structured in accordance with FAA policies. By transferring sponsorship of Ontario International Airport from LAWA to the Ontario International Airport Authority, the airport will have a sponsor that has a vested interest in its success and is accountable for providing long-term airport capacity for the benefit of the entire region, including the City of Los Angeles.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Los Angeles City Council Members Dennis Zine, Bill Rosendahl and Paul Koretz for their Motion of March 20, 2012. Their motion resulted in the Los Angeles City Administrative Officer's report which has given all parties the direction and clarity to move ahead with the airport's transfer. I know I speak for the entire Board of the Ontario International Airport Authority when I say we are fully committed to restoring Ontario International Airport as the region's most important economic engine capable of meeting the long-term demand for air travel in Southern California.

Thank you.

###