



TAOS LAND, WATER AND CULTURE PLANNING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

**TAOS COUNTY COMMISSION APPEAL OF AIRPORT EXPANSION PERMIT
HEARING: TUESDAY, JUNE 9TH 9 AM 105 ALBRIGHT STREET, TAOS**

Is the Airport Expansion Really a Bypass of Taos?

Dear Taoseños,

Some of your neighbors (John Nichols, Dilia Martinez, Phillip Reyna, Ernest Concha, Daniel Romero, Bonnie Korman, Judy Sutton and Edward and Jennifer Sylvester) oppose the airport expansion project because of their serious concerns about the impacts of that project on the Taos environment, it's economy and the neighborhoods surrounding the airport.

This runway is about getting wealthy visitors to the Taos Ski Valley without driving through Taos: “[Louis] Bacon has been working with the local community to have the airport become a more elite jetport, capable of handling up to 45 passenger regional jets.” *Forbes Magazine*, 11/03/2014. The purpose of the \$350 million expansion at the Ski Valley is to provide hotels, restaurants, “Taos” shops and all services, so that skiers coming in charter jets, with an all inclusive package of accommodations, will spend all their money at the Ski Valley.

Without a car, they may never come to the rest of Taos.

Without this expansion, visitors to the Ski Valley drive through Taos, stop and eat in our restaurants, stay in hotels, shop in our businesses, visit the Pueblo and our new Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument.

What will be the result to our economy if the airport expansion becomes a bypass of our town?

This runway is not needed: The real purpose of the project is to allow larger jets to land, not because of wind direction. The FAA recommends that an airport have favorable wind coverage 95% of the time. The current runway has favorable wind coverage 94.13% of the time. A shorter, crosswind runway would be adequate for the few occasions emergency planes can't use the existing runway.

This is about increased air traffic in your community and accident risk to your homes: If the airport is expanded, air traffic will increase 25%, to almost 20,000 take offs and landings per year. There be more and bigger planes, accommodating as large as 100 seat regional jets. 40% of all flights will likely use the new runway, requiring them to circle at low altitude over residential neighborhoods. A expert airport consultant hired by *Taos Land, Water and Culture* found that the majority of airplane accidents occur near the ends of runways. This accident zone for the new runway sits right over existing homes and residential land south and east of the airport.

Because of this accident risk, a plan developed by the Town's own airport consultants shows residential use near the airport will be “clearly unacceptable” when the new runway is put in.

This runway is not about jobs or economic development: “None of the [new airport construction] would create an appreciable permanent change in employment... would not result in any appreciable secondary or induced impacts, including population growth, increased development, and business activity over existing trends.” *Final Environmental Impact Statement by the U.S. Government*



ERJ XR-145 50 seat jet that could be used for charter Taos Ski Valley flights

This runway is not about protecting affordable communities: The neighborhood around the proposed runway is a key place for low and moderate income housing. The Town apparently thinks those who live there should suffer the impacts of a larger airport because they don't live in an expensive area. Why destroy the potential of one of the few beautiful areas where local people can afford to live?

We encourage you to email the County with your comments at edward.vigil@taoscounty.org and/or go to the hearing June 9th to ask your questions and express any concerns you have about the impact of the airport expansion bypass on the Taos economy and the probable devaluation of our businesses and residential properties.

Why is the Town of Taos supporting a bypass of it's own businesses? The County Commissioners are your elected representatives, and the voices of the voters really do matter to them. Help stop this ill-advised boondoggle!

**Email Taos County: edward.vigil@taoscounty.org
Come to the Tuesday, June 9th 9 AM Hearing
Public comments will likely begin about 12 to 1 pm**

You can make a difference!