

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

February 22, 1984

The Honorable Elizabeth Hanford Dole  
Secretary, Department of Transportation  
400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Dole:

As you may know, the City of Chicago and the airlines serving O'Hare Airport are proposing a major expansion of the terminal facilities there, a plan that calls for the expenditure of more than \$1 billion over the next ten years.

The economic development impact generated by this expansion will be tremendous. The project will generate annual economic benefits of \$10 billion or more by 1995, and will result in the creation of almost 100,000 new permanent jobs. Construction of the new facilities will require 8,000 new construction jobs, each lasting about two and one-half years.

Illinois needs the economic benefits this project will produce. Unemployment in the state is currently 9.9%, which means that over 548,000 Illinoisans are out of work. Illinois also lags far behind the national average in its rate of GNP growth. The expansion project is crucial though, not only because of the jobs and economic growth it will create, but also to retain the economic benefits that now result from O'Hare's position as the nation's busiest airport.

We are concerned that there is a real danger that these benefits and jobs will be lost, and O'Hare's status as the preeminent air hub will be seriously jeopardized as the result of proposed permanent flight restrictions for the airport now being considered by the Department of Transportation.

Putting new constraints on airline operations at O'Hare, particularly at a time when they are being lifted elsewhere, artificially encourages airlines to reduce flights to the Chicago area, and to expand them elsewhere, in spite of market forces that would otherwise lead to the opposite result.

We believe that the Department should move toward freeing O'Hare from the inequitable restraints imposed by the proposed new rule. The Federal Aviation Administration has received proposals that suggest that this freedom can be achieved in a way that will not adversely affect the safety of airport operations. Under a proposal submitted by one of the major carriers operating at O'Hare, increases in peak-hour flight operations would occur gradually, with the phase-in period ending when necessary improvements in the FAA's air traffic control facilities have been completed.

We urge the Department to carefully review alternatives such as this. We hope you can find a solution that ensures that O'Hare's ability to meet air traffic demands is not adversely affected, and that the expansion project and the benefits it can provide will become a reality.

We want nothing less than the highest possible level of safety at O'Hare. And, of course, adequate noise protection for the communities surrounding the airport must always remain a top priority. We are sure that the Department of Transportation does not view these objectives and meeting the legitimate needs of the aviation community as irreconcilable.

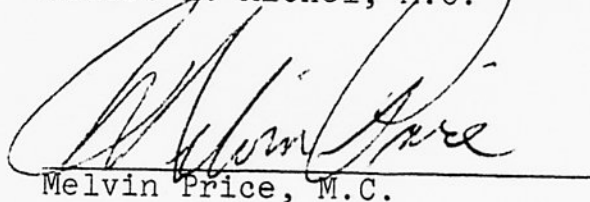
Thank you for your consideration of our request.

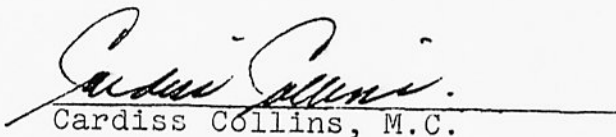
Sincerely,

  
Alan J. Dixon, U.S.S.

Charles H. Percy, U.S.S.

  
Robert H. Michel, M.C.

  
Melvin Price, M.C.

  
Cardiss Collins, M.C.

  
Richard J. Durbin, M.C.

John N. Erlenborn  
John N. Erlenborn, M.C.

Charles A. Hayes  
Charles Hayes, M.C.

William O. Lipinski  
William O. Lipinski, M.C.

Ed Madigan

Edward R. Madigan, M.C.

Lynn Martin  
Lynn Martin, M.C.

George M. O'Brien  
George M. O'Brien, M.C.

Dan Rostenkowski  
Dan Rostenkowski, M.C.

Marty Russo  
Marty Russo, M.C.

Gus Savage  
Gus Savage, M.C.