

STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE JERRY F. COSTELLO
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION
HEARING ON
AVIATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT: NOISE
OCTOBER 24, 2007

- I welcome everyone to our Subcommittee hearing on *Aviation and the Environment: Noise*.

- For people who live near an airport, noise is the most evident environmental impact of aviation. Over the next 20 years, increases in air traffic could outstrip the technological progress in making airplanes quieter, and become a constraint on expanding our nation's airports.

- Our national aviation policy must continue to balance the need to reduce air traffic delays and expand capacity with the need to improve the quality of life of people who live near airports.

- The FAA administers its statutory authority to provide federal funding for noise mitigation projects through part 150 of its regulations, commonly referred to as the “part 150 program.” Participation in the part 150 program, with a few exceptions, enables an airport operator to be eligible to receive AIP funding from the monies set aside for noise projects (approximately \$300 million), often referred to as the “noise-set aside.”

- The part 150 process is voluntary. Airport operators often undertake a part 150 study when doing so will mitigate aircraft noise in communities within the airport’s surrounding area.

- However, some airports may choose not to participate in the part 150 program. Some airports, like Chicago O'Hare, have chosen to fund a majority of their noise mitigation projects through alternative methods, such as AIP funding related to airport development or the collection of passenger facility charges (PFCs).

- In 1996, Mayor Daley created the O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission (ONCC) as a policy making group to direct funding for noise reduction projects, so as to better reflect the concerns of the communities most affected by aircraft noise that surround O'Hare. Arlene Mulder is the Chairperson of the Commission, and I am interested in hearing more from her on these local initiatives, and why the City chose to facilitate noise mitigation through programs other than the part 150 process.

- Since 1982, the FAA has issued \$5 billion in AIP grants and approved \$2.8 billion in PFC revenue for noise mitigation projects. In 2007 alone, the FAA issued 12 AIP grants and approved 1 PFC application for noise studies and 70 grants for noise compatibility mitigation. Noise mitigation continues to be a priority not only for local communities, but the federal government as well.

- That is why H.R. 2881, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007, includes several provisions related to noise mitigation and land use initiatives, such as a phase out of stage 2 aircraft less than 75,000 pounds and a pilot program to encourage airport compatible redevelopment of noise impacted properties adjacent to airports to ensure joint comprehensive land use planning.

- Moreover, the importance of well-funded environmental research cannot be overstated as we struggle to keep pace with the expected growth in aviation. H.R. 2881 includes approximately \$1.8 billion in research funding as well as a program for the development and certification of lower emissions and noise engine and airframe technology, otherwise known as the CLEEN program.

- As the demand for air travel increases, and airports try to increase their capacity, community attitudes will become an even more important element of airport system planning. All interested stakeholders must continue to work together to better manage local aircraft noise issues within surrounding airport communities. Without effective, long-term

management strategies for aircraft noise, airports face a significant constraint on meeting future capacity needs.

- It is my hope that this hearing allows all of us to better understand all facets of the aircraft noise issue and to take advantage of successful practices at other airports to manage the challenges that lie ahead.

- With that, I want to again welcome our witnesses today and I look forward to their testimony.

- Before I recognize Mr. Petri for his opening statement, I ask unanimous consent to allow 2 weeks for all Members to revise and extend their remarks and to permit the submission of additional statements and materials by Members and witnesses. Without objection, so ordered.