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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0530**

HENRY A. WAXMAN  
30TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

June 15, 2004

Marion C. Blakey  
Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Blakey,

I am writing to request that the FAA conduct a Runway Safety Area (RSA) determination for Santa Monica Airport, which is located in the 30<sup>th</sup> District of California, which I represent.

Santa Monica Airport is one of the most heavily used single runway airports in the United States. Its unique layout presents significant safety risks to airport users and the surrounding community. Approximately 75% of the airport is surrounded by residences, with some homes located as close as 250 feet from the runway. Both ends of the runway are lined with houses, buffered only by abrupt hill slopes and public streets. The 5,000 foot runway was built decades ago with no runway safety area and the safety risks have been compounded by the changing fleet mix and increased use of the Airport by larger business jets.

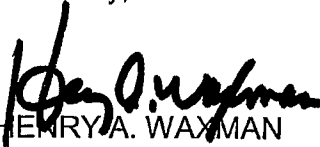
According to the City of Santa Monica, the FAA Western Pacific Region Airports Division agreed to conduct an RSA determination of the existing Airport configuration during a November 20, 2003 meeting with Airport staff. I am concerned that your February 3, 2004 letter to Santa Monica Airport Manager Robert Trimborn indicates that the study would be conditioned on a proposed set of safety enhancements.

NTSB records indicate there are on average 10 aborted takeoff and landing overruns at U.S. airports annually. The record shows that the most severe accidents have occurred at locations with non-standard RSA's. Because Santa Monica Airport has no RSA – no margin of safety – I believe Santa Monica Airport's current configuration warrants an immediate review. Such a determination could help identify improvements and safety enhancements for the Airport, as have many of the RSA determinations already completed around the country in accordance with FAA *Runway Safety Area Program*.

Marion C. Blakey  
June 15, 2004  
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Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
HENRY A. WAXMAN  
Member of Congress



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

Office of the Associate  
Administrator for Airports

800 Independence Ave., SW.  
Washington, DC 20591

JUL 19 2004

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Waxman:

Administrator Blakey has asked me to respond to your letter of June 15 about a runway safety area (RSA) determination at Santa Monica Airport.

You state that the city of Santa Monica (city) claims the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) had agreed to conduct an RSA determination, and that FAA is now imposing conditions on that agreement. In fact, the FAA stated its position consistently at the meeting in Santa Monica in November 2003 and in subsequent letters. It has always been our position that an RSA determination would be conducted only on *improvements* to the existing runway.

The FAA conducts RSA determinations at airports certificated under 14 CFR part 139, Certification of Airports. These determinations are part of a program to bring RSAs at commercial service airports up to regulatory standards, where practicable. (Santa Monica Airport is a general aviation airport. The airport is not certificated under part 139.) These determinations—called “practicability determinations”—recommend potential safety enhancements based on cost and engineering feasibility. We would not do a determination on an existing runway configuration, because there is no issue of cost or feasibility if there are no changes.

At the November meeting, we reached an understanding that the city would propose new recommendations on runway safety area enhancements. The FAA agreed to evaluate this proposal as to its feasibility, practicability, and conformance with the 1984 Agreement.

We have not yet received that proposal. However, our Western-Pacific Region Airports Division is prepared to work with the city to identify measures for enhancing safety at the airport.

We regret any misunderstanding on the part of the city on this issue. My staff tried to make our position clear during the meeting on November 20, 2003, and in our subsequent letter to the airport director.

If you or your staff need further help, please contact Mr. David Balloff, Assistant Administrator for Government and Industry Affairs, at (202) 267-3277.

Sincerely,

Woodie Woodward  
Associate Administrator  
for Airports