

Quogue Association Letter to County Executive Steve Levy
May 21, 2005

Dear Mr. Levy:

Your measure 1350 (to abolish the Airport Lease Screening Committee) came as a surprise when we read about it in the newspapers. We are alarmed that decisions about our next-door neighbor, Gabreski Airport would be made in Hauppauge by your office and the county legislature, without any local citizens' input. While the existing Airport Lease Screening Committee structure may be an imperfect mechanism for growth, it does have the virtue of including a citizen representative. Once decision-making has been centralized and established by law in Hauppauge, the less-populous East End will have virtually no voice to speak louder than the thundering roar of airplanes flying overhead. This is unacceptable.

Our alarm at your proposal seems more than justified by what we have learned the past few days.

The airport has just accepted an application from a business jet operation, presently based at Islip, that would bring 18 jets to Gabreski, with an anticipated 2 to 10 flights per day, complete with fixed base operations and a fuel farm. The firm plans to add 1 or 2 aircraft to its inventory annually and wants to double its initial 25,000 square foot hangar capacity at Gabreski. We understand that at least tentative approval has also been given to other hangar operations, including jet facilities that will dramatically increase the numbers of planes and flights into and out of Gabreski. This is far in excess of estimates the Quogue Association was given just a few months ago about the quantities and types of fixed base operations being sought for Gabreski.

County officials now running operations at Gabreski have nearly completed a draft of a new master plan, without any consultation whatever with local civic groups. This document will be the blueprint for the airport in our midst into the indefinite future. Local input into an updated master plan for Gabreski has been part of our agenda out here all the way back to the days of the Coalition Against Airport Pollution, a federation of civic associations stretching from Westhampton to Hampton Bays. CAAP formed back in 1998 when there was county talk about increasing traffic at the airport.

Many meetings ensued and county representatives assured us we had nothing to fear, as the primary goal at Gabreski was formation of an Empire Development Zone for non-aviation business. Zoning aspects of this enterprise were to be under the local control of the Town of Southampton. Now, we learn that airport management considers 170 acres at Gabreski are wide open to aviation development, that many hangar applications have been accepted and that the 2006 county budget outlines many millions in improvements, including a new Gabreski terminal and control tower.

We appreciate that your staff has professionalized and streamlined operations at Gabreski and seems, after many years of delay to be cleaning up the property and preparing it for what we hope will be a successful, job-creating business park. Our relationships with you and airport officials have been cordial these past several months, as we all put out hearts into the successful effort to keep the 106th Air Guard off the Base Realignment and Closure list. Your leadership

was critical here and we supported it with hundreds of letters to President George W. Bush, the Pentagon and all the stakeholders in the Base Realignment and Closure chain.

We urge your attention to our needs now. We need to be advised of and – to the extent possible – involved in decisions about Gabreski. We need open dialog about Resolution 1350 and other measures whose apparent aim seem to be to shield decisions about Gabreski from public discourse and view.

In summary, we support sensible economic development at Gabreski, but we must be protected from the noise and disturbance of aviation traffic which will destroy the quality of life in our village and surrounding communities.

Sincerely,

The Quogue Association
By Robert H. (“Bo”) Rodgers, President

CC: Hon. Jay Schneiderman, County Legislator, District 2; Hon. Peter O’Leary, District 3; Hon. William Lindsay, District 8; Hon. Joseph Caracappa, District 4; Hon. Angie Carpenter, District 11; Hon. Michael J. Caracciolo, District 1; Hon. Vivian Vilorio-Fisher, District 5; Hon. Daniel P. Losquadro, District 6; Hon. Brian X. Foley, District 7; Hon. Ricardo Montano, District 9; Hon. Cameron Alden, District 10; Hon. John H. Kennedy, Jr., District 12; Hon. Lynne Nowick, District 13; Hon. David Bishop, District 14; Hon. Elie Mystal, District 15; Hon. Allan Binder, District 16; Hon. Paul J. Tonna, District 17; Hon. Jon Cooper, District 18.

Hon. Patrick A. Heaney, Town of Southampton Supervisor
Hon. Nancy S. Graboski, Councilwoman; Hon. Linda A. Kabot, Councilwoman; Hon. Steven T. Kenny, Councilman; Hon. Dennis A. Suskind, Councilman

Hon. George Motz, Mayor, Village of Quogue
Hon. Robert Strebel, Mayor, Village of Westhampton Beach

Hon. Tim Bishop, Congressman, 1st District
Hon. Kenneth P. LaValle, 1st District, New York State Senate
Hon. Fred Thiele, 2nd District, New York State Assembly

Robert S. DeLuca, President, Group for the South Fork
Richard Amper, Executive Director, Pine Barrens Society