



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

April 8, 2004

Susan McDonald
Harrisburg Airports District Office
Federal Aviation Administration
3905 Hartzdale Drive, Ste. 508
Camp Hill, PA 17011

Re: Philadelphia International Airport Runway 17-35 Extension Project, Final
Environmental Impact Statement, Philadelphia, PA March 2005 2004, CEQ # 20050098

Dear Ms. McDonald:

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the above referenced project.

The FEIS evaluates alternatives designed to provide short-term delay reduction. The major cause of delays at the Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) are the current airport configuration and the fleet mix. Analyses of the forecast passenger and aircraft activity levels determined that the numbers and duration of delayed operations at PHL would continue to increase from their current average level of nearly 10 minutes per operation to nearly 19 minutes per operation in 2010. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) considers an airport with average delay in excess of five minutes to be congested. Because PHL is a pacing airport, it contributes to delays throughout the national airport system.

Three alternatives are considered in detail in this FEIS: No Action Alternative; Alternative 1, which would extend Runway 17-35 640 feet to the north and 400 feet to the south for a total length of 6,500 feet; and Alternative 2, which would extend Runway 17-35 1,140 feet to the north and 400 feet to the south for a total length of 7,000 feet. Both build alternatives would include reconfiguring the Economy Parking Lot, relocating the vehicle service road south of Runway 17-35, and closing State Route 291 from Interstate 95 Ramp F to Island Road (approximately 3,000 feet). Both build alternatives also include extending the taxiways associated with Runway 17-35 and relocating navigational aids. Based on the evaluation in the DEIS, both build alternatives have similar environmental impacts as well, with Alternative 2 having a slightly greater area of disturbance, amount of impervious surface, waterway impacts (0.42 acres compared to 0.37 acres), and flood plain impacts (54,600 cubic yards compared to 50,600 cubic yards).



Thank you for the opportunity to review this document and your responses to our comments on the draft EIS. We look forward to working with you on the Capacity Enhancement Program to address larger airport issues and environmental stewardship concerns. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Okorn at (215)814-3330.

Sincerely,

/s/

William Arguto
NEPA Team Leader