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Dupray calls for end to Mather Air test flights

By Ryan Rose

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As the Mather test flight debate rages on, El Dorado County Supervisor Rusty Dupray explains his reasons for wanting the test to stop.

The testing, which started July 17 and includes night time flyovers, was developed by the Federal Aviation Administration and County officials to find alternative ways for cargo traffic to travel to Mather Air Field.

the public reflect air flight over parts of El Dorado County are not what residents want.

Residents on the other side of the county line tend to agree. They however, are benefiting from the test, as the air flights are diverted from their original course over their homes, to the alternative test path.

Area residents living under the original flight path want the test to continue. Those residents believe the testing will provide data necessary to create future plans. Among supporters is area resident Tara McCann, who years earlier helped start the movement to change the Mather Airport flight paths.

McCann believes Dupray's motivation for pushing for an end to the testing is because "it's flying over his house.

"I want to know how Rusty Dupray could take it upon himself to cancel the flight tests over Highway 50," said McCann. "It was a full group that got [the test] requested over a number of years."

She wants more hard evidence before the test is concluded.

"If they didn't take any data from the test flight, like elevations and decibel levels, and base [stopping the test] only on complaints, that is just ludicrous," said McCann. "For years, we complained over here, and they did nothing."

For Dupray, complaints from residents are enough.

"I can only go by what the people are telling me, and when more and more people are getting frustrated with the noise, that's evidence enough."

Dupray believes an answer for Sacramento and El Dorado Counties lies in research conducted last December, in what is commonly referred to as the "Step-down Approach."

"The approach is where planes come in at the high end of the glide slope and with less power. The planes virtually glide in," said Dupray. "They did that test for several months, and our calls went down to zero.

"They did that test for several months, and I don't know why they don't stick with that," said Dupray. "In my opinion, it was the best approach."

Whatever solution is reached, Dupray believes flights over his constituents will eventually end. "In the end, I think they will probably move the path back to its original form," said Dupray.

McCann, however, believes ending the tests will only restart her problems. "I don't think this is going to end soon," said McCann.

Today is day 56 of the 120-day testing period. There are 64 days left.

"If it was up to me the test would end right now," said Dupray, "but I have a feeling they are going to go the whole 120 days."

Dupray believes the test, though not finished, is over; he sites complaints from his constituents as evidence enough for ending it.

"My evidence is that my phone is ringing off the hook and my email box is burning with complaints about the noise," said Dupray.

For Dupray, the calls from