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Cargo planes still fly out of Mather Airport, some residents want flight ban

by Roger Phelps



Philip Wood/The Telegraph

Delivery companies use Mather Airport to transport their cargo in and out of the area, and some residents want the cargo flights stopped due to the noise made over Folsom and El Dorado Hills.

Alongside work to craft a less-noisy flight path for Mather Airport cargo flights, calls are still heard to cut out cargo completely at Mather.

Move all area cargo landings to Sacramento International Airport, several critics said.

Although consultant Steve Alverson of Environmental Science Associates is hired to find a noise-easy flight path for residents, getting end results installed will be time-consuming. Any new path would require approval by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors and by the Federal Aviation Association.

A court settlement April 22 called for a series of public meetings on the flight-path topic. Aircraft noise for years has angered residents along a current flight path - in Folsom, El Dorado Hills, Rescue and Gold Hill.

"Meetings have been held," said Karen Doron, airport-system spokeswoman.

Opponents of any cargo to Mather note that cargo capacity is essentially equal at Sacramento International and at Mather - 8,600 feet. The two runways at Sac Int'l are 8,600 feet long. Mather's main runway is longer, but according to the draft Mather Master Plan, only an unusual cargo flight needs more than 8,600 feet of runway.

"We continue to lay out arguments," said cargo opponent Glen Otey of Folsom.

Otey said at one time he believed cargo and comfortable sleep might coexist, but no more.

"There is no dispute that the aircraft operating at Mather today can for the most part operate on Mather's 8,600 foot runways," wrote J. Glen Rickelton, airport-system planner, in a response to Otey. "However, unlike International, Mather also has acres of available ramp space and airside-fronting leasable space to support logistics associated with air cargo sorting operations, not to mention relatively uncongested runways, taxiways, aprons and local airspace.

Putting it another way, Bree Taylor, system noise officer, wrote, "Having all of the Sacramento region's air cargo operations at Sacramento International Airport is not deemed to be the best use of (Mather) infrastructure."

Folsom City Councilwoman Kerri Howell said Mather infrastructure use is a side issue.

"The most logical solution to all this is, freight to Sacramento International and passengers to Mather," Howell said. "If the objective is to have passenger flights where people are, we've got light rail in Rancho Cordova. The cost of extending light rail to Sacramento International is gargantuan."

Sacramento County Airport System officials say whatever is done locally, it will need FAA approval.

"We will continue to do what we can to minimize noise impacts by aircraft operations at all of the SCAS airports within the limitations placed upon us by federal law and FAA regulations," Taylor said in an e-mail to Otey. "This is not merely rhetoric -- our desire to limit the impact of aircraft noise upon the citizens of the region is quite real, as are the regulatory constraints placed upon us."

The Telegraph's Roger Phelps can be reached at rogerp@goldcountrymedia.com, or post a comment at folsomtelegraph.com

Keywords

mather airport, cargo flights, delivery companies

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