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Public Comment Topic	Subject: Aurora State Airport Master Plan - Protecting Aviation Safety, Economic Opportunity, and the Voices of Wilsonville Residents

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To the Oregon Department of Aviation and State Aviation Board: As a Wilsonville resident in ZIP code 97070, I support a transparent public process that gives individual citizens a meaningful voice in decisions affecting Aurora State Airport. I appreciate the Department's efforts to hear directly from residents rather than relying solely on positions advanced by municipal governments.

For too long, land-use and development discussions in Wilsonville have raised questions about whether the full range of residents' views is being represented. The Aurora State Airport debate offers an opportunity to restore balance, clarify governmental responsibilities, and evaluate competing claims through objective evidence.

Wilsonville has a legitimate land-use role. But that role has boundaries.

Aurora State Airport is owned by the State of Oregon, not the City of Wilsonville. The City does not independently control the airport's runway, aviation operations, or FAA safety determinations.

Wilsonville can, however, play an important role in protecting navigable airspace by regulating compatible development within its jurisdiction. Building heights, hazardous obstructions, glare, and incompatible development near protected approach and departure surfaces are appropriate subjects for local land-use consideration.

This raises an important question: Why has Wilsonville devoted so much attention to influencing airport expansion decisions when its most direct land-use responsibility is ensuring that development within city limits does not compromise aviation safety? Is the controversy principally about noise and environmental protection, or is it also about control over regional development?The City has raised concerns about aircraft noise, pollution, farmland preservation, infrastructure, and the consequences of accommodating larger aircraft. Those concerns deserve serious examination. However, Wilsonville's documented involvement in litigation, proposed legislation, and airport planning suggests that its interest extends beyond simply commenting on aircraft noise. The public deserves a clear explanation of the City's specific objectives, the legal authority it seeks to exercise, and how its proposed restrictions would affect aviation safety, neighboring jurisdictions, existing businesses, and future economic opportunities.

Environmental protection and economic development should not be treated as mutually exclusive. Both deserve measurable standards and independent evaluation.

From a pilot's perspective, runway length is fundamentally a safety and operational question.
Runway performance is influenced by aircraft weight, temperature, wind, runway conditions, obstacles, and required takeoff and landing distances.
A properly engineered runway extension may provide additional operating margins for qualifying aircraft, including business aviation and emergency medical flights.
Depending on aircraft performance requirements, additional usable runway can reduce certain operational limitations.
But safety benefits should be established through aircraft-specific performance analysis, FAA design criteria, and independent review-not political arguments.
A longer runway does not automatically mean safer operations under every condition, nor should it automatically be characterized as an invitation to unrestricted jet traffic.
I encourage the Department to explain precisely which safety deficiencies or operational limitations a proposed extension would address and whether those improvements can be achieved while protecting nearby communities.
Aurora State Airport is also an important economic asset.
The airport supports an aviation ecosystem that includes aircraft maintenance, flight training, corporate aviation, aviation-related services, and emergency medical transportation.
These activities create skilled employment, support local businesses, and contribute to Oregon's broader transportation and economic infrastructure.
Before limiting the airport's future, decision-makers should examine the economic consequences of restricting its ability to serve existing aviation users and accommodate reasonable future needs.
That analysis should include jobs, wages, business activity, tax contributions, infrastructure costs, and impacts on surrounding agricultural and residential communities.
The voices of 97070 residents must not be reduced to a single City position.
Wilsonville residents are not a monolithic group. Some oppose expansion, others support it, and many simply want accurate information and responsible decisions.
I encourage the Department to distinguish between formal City positions and individual resident testimony, publish the technical evidence supporting proposed airport improvements, and provide a fair opportunity for competing perspectives to be heard.
The central issue should not be which governmental entity gains greater influence. It should be whether Oregon can protect aviation safety, respect lawful land-use authority, safeguard surrounding communities, and preserve valuable economic infrastructure.
I support an evidence-based planning process that recognizes

Wilsonville's legitimate role in protecting navigable airspace without confusing that responsibility with ownership or operational control of Aurora State Airport.
The public deserves facts, transparency, and representation-not a narrative controlled by any single jurisdiction.
Respectfully,
Kate Johnson
Wilsonville, Oregon 97070