

An Alternative Solution to the Airport Weight Ordinance Dilemma  
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Marion Barritt, Vice President of the Carson Valley Vanguard Coalition.

Commissioners,

CVVC remains opposed to the PPR Test proposal for the same reasons we explained last time.

We are here today with a conceptual solution to the problem of how to respect the will of the voters AND reduce legal and fiscal exposure for the County. What follows is tentative and would need fine tuning and drafting.

Our potential solution is the passage of a new comprehensive Use Ordinance that strictly controls infrastructure to only that which is consistent with a small rural airport that is expressly directed to primarily serve its owners. In other words, it would strongly deter our airport from any major unwanted change in character.

Here's what such an ordinance would SUPPORT, for example:

- more County T-hangars
- good quality space available for growing needs of County businesses and residents
- re-opening of runway 21 on safety grounds
- all aircraft operations in support of local businesses and residents
- landing fees for heavy aircraft
- full support for emergency services and military emergencies
- infrequent use by larger aircraft directly serving County businesses - like Starbuck's

Here's what such an ordinance would PROHIBIT, for example:

- a control tower
- further strengthening or lengthening of runways and taxiways
- a jet blast area
- precision instrument approaches
- a terminal building
- night flight noise
- airport land use inconsistent with County aviation needs
- the landing of aircraft weighing more than can be supported by the strength of the runways and taxiways
- the landing of heavy aircraft without prior permission (with restricted cumulative landings)
- funding for any infrastructure beyond what's absolutely necessary to serve bona fide local needs.

In this way we can serve our County needs while avoiding attracting the importation of excessive environmental impacts. This would not discriminate against anyone, but it would direct our airport to a desirable future. The FAA consistently says this is our airport and we should define its future, so let's do that.

Subject to our board's approval, CVVC stands ready to help detail such a comprehensive new Use Ordinance. It should be incorporated in the Airport Master Plan update process and placed in context with all the other major issues at the airport. And please be aware that many of our members and local residents still favor a solution that simply foregoes future FAA funding to win back our freedom. In our view, this remains a viable path forward if we can not reach a compromise that will substantially preserve the airport.

Furthermore, we are greatly dissatisfied with recent County actions that have led to the 110,000 pound weight number. This entire problem could and should have been avoided. We recommend the Commissioners direct a post-mortem on

what happened here, then take action to prevent a repeat of such gross disrespect of the voters. Meanwhile, a compromise solution, as outlined here, might be acceptable to a majority of voters in 2008 if it is accompanied by a new Airport Master Plan that also respects the voters. CVVC recognizes the need for compromise to solve this problem, and our proposal is not a perfect solution. So we invite comment.

We think this, and many other airport controversies, are rooted in an inadequate governance system for such a complex airport. There is simply inadequate expert oversight and guidance for airport management. Many airports, including Carson City, have a dedicated "Airport Board of Directors". Such a Board could report to the Douglas County Commissioners and it would have executive responsibility for airport policy and operational performance. This concept has merit and we urge you to consider such a change inside the context of the Airport Master Plan update.

In summary then, we urge you:

- Do not offend the voters with a PPR Test. It would achieve nothing.
- Do not ask the voters to simply approve a higher weight ordinance. It would not pass.
- Ask them instead to approve a comprehensive new Use Ordinance that respects and strengthens the underlying intent of the existing Weight Ordinance. This would protect the County from threatened legal and fiscal action AND serve the will of the voters.
- And seriously consider creating a new Airport Board of Directors. It would solve many problems and relieve County Commissioners from becoming airport experts.

Thank you.