



Snohomish County
County Executive's Office
Aaron Reardon
County Executive

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Snohomish County announces law firm pick for MRD Panel

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Firm distinguished for its work with nation's largest airports to consult with MRD Panel on federal airport regulations

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon announced today the selection of the national airport law firm of Kaplan Kirsch Rockwell to provide legal and regulatory expertise to assist the Mediated Review Determination Panel (MRD) in its role to update the 27 year-old MRD document.

At its July meeting, the Panel voted to seek the assistance of legal counsel to determine whether changes in federal law during the past two decades may today conflict with the MRD document. It will also examine the extent to which commercial air service at Paine Field may be limited within the context of these laws. Legal counsel will provide background information only and will not create a legal roadmap either to promote or discourage commercial air service.

Peter Kirsch of the firm's Denver office will lead the effort for the firm, which is not only the nation's largest legal practice dedicated to representation of airports, but has distinguished itself in understanding the diversity of interests engaged in airport projects. Kaplan Kirsch Rockwell has offices in New York, Washington, D.C., and Denver, and currently works for some of the largest airports, including Chicago-O'Hare, San Francisco International, Las Vegas McCarran International, and Detroit - Wayne County Metropolitan. The firm has represented both opponents and supporters of airport expansion. Kaplan Kirsch Rockwell's diversity of practice mirrors the balance that Executive Reardon sought when creating the MRD Panel.

Executive Reardon said, “I am very pleased to have Kaplan Kirsch assist the MRD Panel. This firm wrote the book on airport use regulations and will be able to provide the legal and regulatory background requested by the Panel.”

Kaplan Kirsch will begin immediately to prepare a briefing paper to educate the MRD Panel on the federal statutory and regulatory constraints on the use of Paine Field and the questions posed by the Panel. After the MRD Panel has a chance to read the briefing paper, Kirsch will meet with Panel members during a public meeting to review the document and answer any further questions. The purpose of the meeting will be to answer questions by the MRD panel members and discuss how federal law applies to Paine Field.

To select a law firm, the Office of the Executive consulted with the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office and Panel members and advisers. Three national law firms who are leaders in airport law were asked to provide proposals. In addition to Kaplan Kirsch Rockwell, proposals were sought from Kelley Drye Collier of Washington D.C. and Schnader Harrison of Philadelphia. Kaplan Kirsch Rockwell estimated its fee at \$18,000, plus expenses, such as travel to Everett. All three firms demonstrated considerable knowledge and cost estimates ranged as high as \$35,000. Kaplan Kirsch Rockwell’s proposal was selected as the best fit to meet the needs of the County and the Panel.

Executive Reardon formed the MRD Panel to update the Mediated Role Determination Document adopted by the County Council in 1979. The Panel began meeting in November 2005 and will complete its work this fall.

For additional information about the MRD, contact Peter Camp, Executive Director at 425.388.3123 or via email at, peter.camp@co.snohomish.wa.us.

For information about Kaplan Kirsch Rockwell, L.L.P., contact Peter Kirsch at 303.825.7000, or pkirsch@kaplankirsch.com.

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