



Snohomish County
County Executive's Office

For immediate release – Friday, May 6, 2005

Aaron Reardon
County Executive

M/S #407
3000 Rockefeller Avenue
Everett, WA 98201
(425) 388-3460
FAX (425) 388-3434

county.executive@co.snohomish.wa.us
www.co.snohomish.wa.us

Mukilteo, Everett mayors to join in landmark review of Paine Field role, County Executive says

--

*Reardon cites differing interpretations of document's meaning
in call for talks*

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon told a community meeting Thursday that the mayors of Mukilteo and Everett will join him in a review of the nearly three-decades-old document that determines aviation uses at Paine Field.

“Citizens on both sides of this issue say a review is long overdue,” said Executive Reardon, who will appoint Mukilteo Mayor Don Doran and Everett Mayor Ray Stephanson to co-chair the review.

Aviation activities at Paine Field – or the Snohomish County Airport – have been guided since 1978 by the Mediated Role Determination (MRD).

The mediated role calls for light aircraft to be Paine Field’s primary users while encouraging expansion of aircraft-related industries, business and corporate aviation, air taxi and commuter service. Air cargo aviation, supplemental and charter air passenger service, large transport crew training operations and military aviation were discouraged from growing beyond 1978 service levels.

Executive Reardon proposed the MRD review at a meeting of Save Our Communities, a Mukilteo-based organization that has banded together to oppose commercial air traffic at Paine Field. He told more than 300 people that he continues to back the 1978 MRD, but that misinterpretations and misrepresentations of the document after nearly 30 years mean its review is long overdue. The MRD provides for updates when circumstances warranted, but that has not happened in the intervening years.

Save Our Committee leaders embraced Executive Reardon's call for a review at the meeting.

Executive Reardon said he was prepared to work with Snohomish County Council members to select participants on the review panel.

In the mid-1970s when the original MRD was drawn up, a "Mediation Panel" that included representatives from the County, Snohomish County cities, concerned citizens, tenants and users of Paine Field met to work on a host of issues surrounding the airport. The panel's recommendations were amended and adopted by the Snohomish County Commission, the forerunner to today's County Council.

"Citizens across the county – both supporters and opponents of commercial air service at Paine Field – deserve clarity on this issue," Executive Reardon said.

Paine Field was originally constructed in 1936 as a Works Progress Administration project.

When the United States entered into World War II, there was a need to protect the Bremerton Shipyards and the Boeing plant and airfield in Seattle, which produced the B-17 and B-29 bombers. The Army Air Corps occupied the field in the spring of 1941. At that time, Paine Field consisted of little more than two paved runways in the common cross-section pattern, set off at different angles to take advantage of the most favorable winds.

The year of 1966 proved to be the pivotal year in the history of Snohomish County Airport. The Air Force had all but pulled out of Paine Field leaving it open for exclusive commercial considerations. The Boeing Company was looking for an area large enough to construct an assembly plant for the 747. Land just north of Paine Field was chosen to construct the new facilities, including some development on the airport itself. Both the local government and the FAA concurred with the development.

The Boeing Company has been the largest business both in size and economic impact to come to Paine Field; however, many more businesses have followed Boeing's lead, including Goodrich Aerospace, which operates the largest aerospace repair facility in North America.

Today, Snohomish County Airport is home to over fifty-five on-site businesses providing over 30,000 jobs to the community.

##

For additional information, please contact:

Mark Funk
Executive Management Analyst
Snohomish County
(425) 388-3623