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Sacramento County Airport System

Preamble

To prepare for this report the Sacramento Grand Jury toured Sacramento International Airport facilities and was briefed by the Director and the Airport Staff on McClellan, Mather Field, Sacramento International, and Sacramento Executive Airport (Executive). Tours were limited to Sacramento International and Executive Airports and included the passenger arrival and departure areas, the Sheriff's Department Airport Division, and the Airport Fire and Crash Rescue facilities. Interviews and information were gathered from Sacramento County and City Planning Departments, and the Sacramento County Airport Director and his staff. Officials provided us with ample information on all subjects.

The Sacramento County Airport System is responsible for operation of Sacramento International Airport, Executive Airport, and Franklin Field. The System has a contract with the Economic Development Department to operate McClellan Airport.

Sacramento International Airport (International) is one of four major passenger airports serving northern California, with increasing importance as population growth shifts eastward from San Francisco. Planned and built away from existing metropolitan areas in 1967, International has not to date been a significant nuisance to surrounding areas. It has not had to operate under pressures exerted by residential developments which have plagued many other regional airports serving developing metropolitan areas.

A former United States Air Force Base, Mather Field (Mather) now serves as the primary cargo airport for the greater Sacramento region, with private and corporate aircraft, including jets, welcomed.

The 2007-2008 Grand Jury wanted to make certain all steps are being taken to avoid a repeat of the aircraft tragedy at Farrell's Ice cream Parlor that occurred in the 1970's, and to address noise problems resulting from aircraft operation at Executive.

The City of Sacramento owns Executive Airport and contracts with the County Airports Dept. for the operation and maintenance of the facility. This is detailed in a 25-year lease between the City and the County Airports Department. If the City moved operations to other existing airports and ceased using Executive, the City would need to give a 25-year notice to the current operator.

Executive's current runways cannot be lengthened due to residential and commercial encroachment over several decades. Current operational policy does not include diverting the increasing usage of Executive by larger corporate jets, to Mather and McClellan which have longer, safer runways with less encroachment.

Noise and types of aircraft using Executive is on the increase, however use restrictions are dictated by the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA). Executive does not have discretionary authority on these activities. Executive is under three different noise restriction standards from the FAA,