

May 31, 1992

Midcoast Community Council  
P. O. Box 64  
Moss Beach, California

Dear Council Members;

I am writing this letter in response to a circular and petition currently being distributed in the Mid-Coast Community area by several persons under the organizational name of "Citizens for Decibel Abatement.

I am employed on a contract basis at the Half Moon Bay Airport, with duties to disperse fuel for aircraft, operate the Unicom aircraft radio and drive the crash truck. I am usually the person in the office and receive most of the noise or low flying complaints from local citizens.

The Half Moon Bay airport, along with the San Carlos airport are both owned and operated by San Mateo County. Neither airport receives ANY TAX FUNDS. Both are 'Enterprize Operations', and are funded solely by income generated by hangar rentals, tie-down fees, aircraft oriented businesses located on the airport property and property leases. At the Half Moon Bay airport alone, there are a restaurant, two Fixed Base Operators (Aircraft overhaul and repair), an Air Taxi Service, a fuel concession and a local farmer who leases the major portion of the airport for growing hay. There are 8 persons employed in those businesses. The County has only 1 person employed at the airport and his salary is paid by income generated by the airport.

At the present time there are about 70+ airplanes headquartered at the Half Moon Bay airport. Two of these are twin-engined aircraft, the remainder being small 2-4 place, single engine airplanes. 95% of these aircraft are used for the owners personal business or pleasure flying. Each of these aircraft pay a tax yearly to the County based on the value of the airplane.

This airport has been in operation for 50 years. It is no secret that it is here. Over the years, growth has resulted in both homes and commercial development encroaching closer and closer to the airport perimeter, and this has inevitably resulted in noise and low-flying complaints.

San Carlos, Palo Alto, Hayward, Concord, Oakland and San Francisco airports find themselves in the same situation. Planning and Zoning Commissions have permitted housing to be built immediately adjacent to these airports, and now, regardless of which direction the airport authorities attempt to adjust the aircraft patterns, they merely shift the focus of the noise complaints.

The pilots from those airports, and rest assured, the pilots from Half Moon Bay airport will do all in their power, consistent with safety, to alleviate the sources of noise complaints, etc. But this is an airport, airplanes congregate around airports and airplanes make noise. Half Moon Bay with its long, wide runway and the perception of being 'out in the country', attracts both student and higher rated pilots to this location to conduct training and proficiency type flights. "Touch and Go" type flights, which seem to be the thrust of the current complaints have been an accepted procedure and taught by flight schools for many years.

Half Moon Bay is an "uncontrolled" airport in that there is no control tower here. Pilots landing and departing make contact by radio on a 'Unicom' (122.8) frequency and advised by me of the currently active runway. There is no legal requirement for them to do so, however, the vast majority do such for safety's sake. They also make 'in the blind' calls confirming their position on the downwind, base and final legs of the landing pattern. At the departure end of both runway 30 and 12, signs are posted advising all aircraft to depart "straight out, climb to 500' before turning and to avoid homes". Aircraft departing to the northwest off runway 30 find this practically impossible as there are homes on all possible departure paths.

Again, I reiterate, this is an airport. The pilots who own and base aircraft at Half Moon Bay (and San Carlos) all have invested much time, effort and money in acquiring their licenses and in purchasing, maintaining and flying their aircraft. I suggest that as a group they are as safety oriented in their flying and as thoughtful of the rights of others as you are apt to find. This is not the first time that a few of our neighbors have attempted to restrict our rights. I, and I know all the pilots from Half Moon Bay are more than ready to meet any such challenge with facts and reasonableness.

It is our position that this airport is a major plus for the Coast-side community. The airport is self-supporting, provides tax money to the county, is the home of the local Sheriffs Sub-Station and provides employment to a number of people. Persons flying into the airport are a major source of income to the several restaurants in the Princeton Harbor. The Medivac Helicopter lands here, and following the Loma Prieta earthquake, volunteer pilots transported large amounts of emergency supplies to Santa Cruz, etc. In November of each year thousands of persons attend the airport 'open house', and in April, a local charity benefits from the 'Dream Machine' antique car and plane show at the airport. We feel that we are a good neighbor, but are always prepared to review any suggestion for improvement.

Very truly yours;



David C. Foster  
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