



**TRUCKEE TAHOE AIRPORT DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTOR STAFF REPORT**

AGENDA TITLE: Proposed Policy Instruction 515: Community Annoyance Comments Procedures

MEETING DATE: April 27, 2016

PREPARED BY: Mike Cooke, Aviation & Community Services Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Review and adopt policy instruction for protocols governing community annoyance comments. The 3 options for consideration are:

1. Do nothing
2. Motion to adopt Policy Instruction 515
3. Recommend Changes to PI and review when complete

The Board may choose to move forward with one of these options or continue the item to a future meeting pending any additional information or input as requested by the Board.

DISCUSSION: Noise concerns of residents in communities surrounding the airport are a high priority of the District. The mission statement adopted in January 2007 identifies low impact to neighbors as a primary objective. The District has made efforts for many years to respectfully handle community annoyance and report on those efforts in a public forum. As with any success, solid and consistent strategies must be adopted to attain the desired result.

One strategy integral to making progress in the effort to mitigate impacts is to formalize a procedure which facilitates community annoyance comments. This is no easy task. Annoyance is subjective and emotional. One person's perfume is another's poison. This holds true for residents near the airfield: some are aviation enthusiasts while others might prefer the airport not exist. Typically complaints come from the latter and not the former. In fairness to all stakeholders, a procedure which adequately addresses the concerns of the commenter while allowing for efficient and sensible use of resources to respond to the complaint is necessary.

While the overall strategy to minimize adverse impacts to the community weaves consistently through the decision-making of staff and Board members, a clear policy which directs staff on annoyance comments has never been adopted. Responding and reporting have been an evolutionary process. This may be due to a historical lack of surveillance and mostly estimated operations numbers. However, since 2011 the District has captured high quality operations data and can much more effectively associate operations to comments than ever before. So the time is right to develop a formal response policy.

The procedures outlined in PI515 directs staff to take *reasonable* and *appropriate* action to respond to and resolve instances of community annoyance. Some solutions are simple: ask the pilot to fly the NAP or abide by the curfew or fly higher, etc. But it would be foolish to assume all instances *can* or even *should* be resolved. As the region continues to grow, there is more traffic in all transportation modes. The airfield faces encroaching developments and proposals which may stress prescribed land uses. It becomes difficult to direct aircraft to fly over diminishing less-populated areas. The airport does not control aircraft in flight. Residents near runway ends, typically within about 2 miles are the most vocal commenters. It behooves the District and the commenters to expend energies on fixable problems and not to deplete all resources on those that may not be fixable. There is a directive in the PI to limit the number of compliant comments staff will process per month.

There should be no misconceptions that this policy will meet the demands of every circumstance. Many questions not specifically written into the PI are open for debate and may require document changes. Examples are: Is there a geographic boundary for processing comments and does that need to be defined? Is there an altitude criteria? Should there be special considerations for residents near runway ends? Should staff put a time or dollar limit on a comment effort? Should we censure a commenter in certain circumstances? The list of questions could go on and on, so the intent of the policy is guidance with Board-level support. Staff will use best judgement for non-standard cases.

STRATEGIC PLAN REFERENCES: The Strategic Plan¹ outlines a road map to accomplish identified District goals. This policy can support those goals in multiple strategy areas:

- 3.3 – Annoyance Mitigation – Objective 3
- 4.2 – Transient Airport Users – Objective 1
- 4.3 – Impacted Residents
- 5.2 – Use of Public Funds – Objective 1 & 2

¹ A full copy of the District Strategic Plan can be found at www.truckeeatahoeairport.com click Administration Link, then Publications Link.

WHAT'S NEXT: Pending Board and Public comment, staff will adopt and follow PI-515.

FISCAL IMPACT: No additional funding would be required within the context of this PI. It is likely that reduced staff time in some circumstances may realize a savings in staff resources. The Policy Instruction largely formalizes procedures currently employed in the processing of annoyance comments.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: Current response protocols would be formalized but remain largely the same and avenues to comment would not change. Commenters exceeding the PI threshold of comments per month would be notified when compliant comments limits are reached.

SAMPLE MOTION(S):

Option 1 Sample Motion - I move to adopt Policy Instruction 515.

Option 2 Sample Motion – I move to adopt Policy Instruction 515 with the following changes:

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ATTACHMENTS:

2002 Monthly Noise Report