





City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Memorandum

Date: July 1, 2010

To: Patrick H. West, City Manager 

From: Mario Rodriguez, Director, Long Beach Airport 

For: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: Federal Aviation Administration Study of Area Airspace

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is currently in the process of studying the potential benefits and liabilities associated with changes to the Long Beach area airspace. This process will take into consideration many issues, including the makeup of the users that occupy this airspace. A recent story published in the Los Angeles Times highlighted the process and the public meetings the FAA is holding with interested parties. The changes contemplated do not affect the Airport, but rather the airspace and the FAA rules pilots will follow.

The FAA is studying the implementation of a Class C airspace. Under Class C requirements, pilots must establish two-way communications with the FAA tower before entering the airspace. Controllers keep aircraft separated, advise pilots about air traffic and provide safety alerts to aircraft flying under instrument flight rules and visual flight rules. The current airspace is categorized as Class D. Establishing radio contact with the tower is required, but Class D provides more latitude for planes flying under visual flight rules.

The FAA is fully charged with the safe and efficient operation of all airspace in the United States. As part of their mandate, the FAA is further charged with the study and rule making for airspace. Our indication is that the FAA will implement the change, if it results in an enhancement to the airspace which is currently being managed to the FAA's very high safety standard.

It must be noted that the issue is one of airspace, not to be confused with Airport operations or safety. The Long Beach Airport is fully compliant with all FAA requirements and received a perfect mark during the most recent FAA inspection.

If you have any questions please contact Airport Director Mario Rodriguez at extension 8-2605.

MR:km
SVAP\DIRECTOR\TFF LGB AIRSPACE.DOC

cc: Suzanne Frick, Assistant City Manager
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Jyl Marden, City Council Liaison
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Sharon Diggs-Jackson, Long Beach Airport