



AIRSPACE WATCH



FAA UNVEILS LGB CLASS C AIRSPACE PROPOSAL By Candy Robinson

June 22nd and 23rd, the FAA held two informal airspace meetings to solicit comments on their "Proposal to Establish Class C Airspace around Long Beach Airport & Revise SNA Class C Airspace." Between the two meetings, approximately 250 pilots were in attendance. The groups comprised pilots from general aviation, corporate aviation and the air carriers and, in addition to Long Beach several local airports such as Torrance, Fullerton and Compton were represented. Concerns ranged from lack of access to outlying airports, compression under layers of airspace, complexity, discrimination, lack of available data prior to the meetings (the proposal was unveiled at the first meeting), the NPRM process, justification for the airspace change, frequency congestion, controller staffing, conspiracies, noticing of the meetings and meeting location, to name just a few.

The LA Times ran an article that came out Monday June 28th. The link is:

<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/jun/27/local/la-me-airspace-20100626/2>

As a flight school owner at LGB, I adamantly oppose the implementation of Class C airspace around lgb. Forcing GA to obtain a clearance prior to departure will cause delays, be subject to denial, force additional complexity to operators within the airspace. I do not believe it is safer to require all GA flights outside of Class D to be in communication with controllers; we have seen too many instances of near- or actual midairs with both aircraft in communication with ATC.

An FAA DPE that conducts many of the club checkrides has stated that coming to LGB versus the closer John Wayne is worth the drive because so much more can be done at a class D airport such as LGB versus a Class C airport such as John Wayne.

The numbers substantiate that LGB is a GA airport with airline flights; more similar to Van Nuys without Class C than Burbank or John Wayne with Class C.

The amount of flight activity that would emigrate from LGB would be devastating to the LGB businesses and upset the balance of aviation upon which the airport depends to operate economically. "The FAA doesn't own the airspace; it manages the airspace for the users. This finite resource needs to accommodate all users while allowing the FAA to perform its responsibility of providing air traffic control service to participating aircraft." (http://www.aopa.org/whatsnew/air_traffic/tcagroup.html)

We have also been able to make many suggestions of procedural changes that could be implemented immediately to make the airspace safer, whether or not LGB gets Class C airspace, including but not limited to:

1. Change the 180 degree heading on departure from Runway 30 to 230 degree heading as it may be opposed by the noise-sensitive Palos Verdes community.
2. Change sectorization of SoCal airspace west of LGB so that departures off Runway 30 don't change frequencies while transiting the shoreline and/or the LB practice area.
3. Climb to 5000 feet in the initial clearance (currently cleared to climb to 3 expect 5 in 10) either gets air carriers into Class B more quickly; at a minimum clears practice area south of the Queen Mary.
4. Reroute airways over LGB class D airspace to facilitate climb to 5000 feet; in fact, soon after I suggested this, two additional airways were added.
5. Establish a mechanism by which operators can document controller handling or airspace clearances to enable study of problem situations.
6. Dedicated Controller Arrival and Departure Procedures -- On departure Runway 30, climb to 5,000 to get into LAX Class B with a single controller (no frequency changes) between LGB Class D and LAX Class B; that is, a dedicated controller per flight to watch dog the flight for the 30 seconds between the two airspaces. Likewise for arrivals for Runway 30 for the time between SNA Class C and LGB Class D. Arrivals for Runway 12 can be made to the northeast with the dedicated controller likewise controlling those flights. This process could be implemented almost immediately; airspace changes take years.

It is my hope that, given the feedback from these two fact-finding meetings, the FAA will realize that Class C should not be implemented at LGB.

The comment period for feedback regarding the proposed Class C airspace is July 31, 2010. Send or deliver comments in triplicate to:

Clark Desing, Operations Support Group, AJV-W2
Western Service Area, Air Traffic Organization
Federal Aviation Administration
1601 Lind Avenue, SW
Renton, WA 98057

Please check at www.lbflying.com/LBAA for more information and sample letters to send to the FAA regarding the proposal.

DON'T LET CLASS C HAPPEN TO OUR AIRPORT!!! SEND YOUR RESPONSE TODAY!!!