



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

DAWN LUEDTKE
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 7

January 31, 2023

Chairwoman Melony Griffith
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SUBJECT: Support SB 162

Dear Chairwoman Griffith and Members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support Senate Bill 162 regarding the Maryland Aviation Commission. This bill would expand the scope of the Commission's advisory capacity by including local airports in its jurisdiction, emphasize the need to consider health and wellness in surrounding communities, and increase the stakeholder groups that should be consulted by the Commission.

As the proud home of two local airports, this is of particular interest to my district. Montgomery County's 7th Council District includes Davis Airport, an airport in Laytonsville, and the Montgomery County Airpark, a general aviation public airport in Gaithersburg. Since 2011, flight operations have more than doubled at the Airpark, with 27,418 in FY 2011 and 64,206 in FY 2021.

This increase in activity has corresponded with an increase in residential concerns and noise complaints, particularly since 2019. This has included allegations of excessive noise, low-flying planes, inconsistent noise monitoring, increased "touch and go" operations, unsafe flight practices and patterns, and lead pollution in the air and soils. In addition, the Montgomery County Airpark lacks on-site air traffic control.

Some of the worst concerns of residents were actualized on November 27, 2022 when a small plane crashed into power lines in Montgomery Village while attempting to land at the Airpark in hazardous conditions. Roughly one-third of Montgomery County was without power until the early hours of November 28. According to the Preliminary NTSB Report, the pilot was flying 225 to 500 feet below minimum altitude and took a different route than recommended by air traffic controllers. The complaints we have received suggest that these elements are not unique to this case, but rather an ongoing issue at the Airpark.

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Senate Bill 162 would provide us with another means to seek mitigation for these issues while uplifting the voices of those in the surrounding communities. This would give local stakeholders and advisory bodies a seat at the table with the Federal Aviation Administration and Maryland Aviation Administration, which are responsible for regulating flight and airport procedures.

The addition of local governments to the stakeholders listed also provides us with the opportunity to work together to improve the quality of life for residents in our district. Please support the wellbeing of Marylanders impacted by airports and the aviation industry by supporting Senate Bill 162.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn Luedtke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "L".

Dawn Luedtke
Councilmember, District 7
Montgomery County