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**ROSENDAHL CALLS ON LAWA TO EXPLAIN LACK OF
RUNWAY SAFETY TECHNOLOGY**

Councilman, Safety Panel Endorse NASA Study of North Airfield Safety Issues

LOS ANGELES- Saying state of the art technology could have prevented yesterday's near-miss at LAX, City Councilmember Bill Rosendahl is calling on Los Angeles World Airports to install runway status lights and to explain why it has not done so yet.

Rosendahl submitted a motion today asking LAWA to report to the Trade, Commerce and Tourism Committee on why the technology, in use at airports in San Diego and Dallas, is not used to prevent the type of human error that led to Thursday's incursion.

Rosendahl also endorsed a call by the North Runway Safety Advisory Committee (NORSAC) for LAWA to hire NASA to conduct a comprehensive study of North Airfield safety – a move the airport agency is poised to make next week.

"Safety is priority one," Rosendahl said. "We need to know why modern, common-sense, relatively cheap fixes are not in place. And we need a credible, unbiased expert agency like NASA to examine any safety issue, and help us craft a range of solutions."

Rosendahl's motion calls for LAWA to explain why LAX does not use the technology and to provide a timetable for its installation. Rosendahl first asked LAWA officials about the

technology more than a year ago.

During Thursday's runway incursion a ground controller cleared a pilot to taxi to the gate, wrongly assuming he was cleared to cross the runway, causing two planes to come within as little as 50 feet of one another. Had runway status lights been in place, they would have flashed red, instructing the pilot to disregard the verbal clearance. Greater runway separation, which LAWA has called for in the past, would have done nothing to prevent the incident, which resulted from human error and involved just one runway.

Rosendahl said the incident – and LAWA's lack of modern technology on the north airfield – underscores the need for NASA's involvement. Word of Thursday's incursion came as NOR SAC unanimously decided that NASA was the only agency that could credibly and fairly examine the issue. The Board of Airport Commissioners is expected to act on the recommendation as early as Monday.

"This is a breakthrough moment," Rosendahl said after the NOR SAC vote. "For the first time, all sides of this contentious debate have agreed on how to fairly look at the safety issue on the north airfield. Everyone agrees that NASA is fair, independent and above approach."

Formed at the urging of Rosendahl with the unanimous support of the City Council, NOR SAC is composed of airport-area elected officials, local community groups, aviation interests and greater Los Angeles labor and business interests.

The advisory panel endorsed a narrowly defined study that will first look at whether a safety issue exists on the airfield. A second phase of the study will help NOR SAC and LAWA examine a range of solutions to the problem.

Denny Schneider of the Alliance for a Regional Solution to Airport Congestion (ARSAC) said, "NASA has the expertise and integrity necessary to conduct a thorough and unbiased study that community members and business leaders alike will support. We are quickly moving forward with modernizing LAX while minimizing impacts on the surrounding community."

"We are pleased that the scope of work of this first phase is going to focus strictly on safety," said David Voss of the Neighborhood Council of Westchester and Playa del Rey, "and not on expanding LAX."

For more than a year, while consensus has emerged on several elements of LAX modernization – including a new Midfield Terminal behind the Tom Bradley International Terminal, an automated people mover, a consolidated rental car center, and the LAX Green Line extension– there has been tremendous controversy over LAWA's claims of a north airfield safety issue. Opponents of a proposal to move runways north into Westchester and Playa del Rey neighborhoods have pointed out most runway incursions happen on the southern runways, and that the FAA recently deemed the airfield safe. Recent LAWA-

commissioned peer review studies identifying safety issues were roundly condemned as unbiased and skewed.

LAWA hired NASA Ames Research Center and its FutureFlight Central air traffic control simulator to study safety on the South Airfield from 2001 to 2003. NASA has extensive experience working with both pilots and controllers to resolve problems leading to dangerous runway incursions.

Rosendahl said he was pleased that business, labor, community, and aviation representatives all agreed to come together to find a way to conduct a safety study that all parties could rely upon.

“It is essential that we put this issue to rest so we can move forward with LAX modernization and keep our promises to the people of Westchester and Playa del Rey.”

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