

Cantwell Amendment: Noise Abatement

Background

The language of this amendment addresses a local issue regarding noise mitigation projects in the Highline School District, which is adjacent to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

In 2002, the Port of Seattle signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the FAA and the Highline School District regarding noise mitigation for 15 schools that are specifically identified in the agreement. The MOA was the product of lengthy negotiations between the Port, the District and the FAA starting in early 2001 and was the outcome of decades of consultation between the Port and the District to address the impact of airplane noise on the education of children attending District schools. So far, eight schools have been provided FAA AIP funding. Seven schools remain to be sound insulated for a total of \$38,587,565, of which \$30.2 million is marked for AIP funding.

The Highline School District is one of the poorest and most diverse in the state of Washington, with 68% of children on free or reduced meals and a full 25% non-English speaking students. The airport is located in the center of the district, and many of the district's schools are impacted by airport noise. The MOA will continue to allow the Port and the FAA to play a role in helping create a more positive learning environment.

The language is necessary because the local ADO has raised some unexpected questions about the continuing eligibility of the schools identified in the MOA. This was entirely unanticipated because not only is the MOA still in effect but also multiple AIP grants have previously been approved pursuant to the terms of the MOA.

If the schools are not deemed eligible, this would leave a gap of more than \$30 million toward the soundproofing of these schools. More importantly, public school children looking for an opportunity to learn in a suitable environment would be denied that status. This is highly problematic for the educational rights of children in the Highline School District.

The recently passed Highline School District bond measure includes funding for four schools, two of which would require AIP grant funding: constructing a new Des Moines elementary school and rebuilding Highline High School.

The Amendment

The Cantwell amendment would clarify that the schools included in the MOA between the Port of Seattle, the Highline School District, and the FAA would remain eligible for AIP funding for noise mitigation projects limited to replacement of doors, windows, and the installation of through the wall AC units, or an equivalent amount that will be contributed toward reconstruction.