

November 07, 2023

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

“Reimagining Whiteman Airport”

On October 7, 2022, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed an endangerment finding regarding leaded aviation gasoline which underwent public notice and comment. As lead emissions from aircraft are an important and urgent public health issue, the Board of Supervisors subsequently instructed the Interim County Counsel on January 10, 2023, to send a five-signature letter to the Administrator of the EPA urging the EPA to eliminate lead from aviation gasoline and supporting EPA's strong endangerment finding on leaded aviation gasoline.

Piston-engine aircraft operate on leaded aviation gasoline and are the primary users of the five airports owned by Los Angeles County: (1) Brackett Field Airport in La Verne, (2) Compton/Woodley Airport in Compton, (3) San Gabriel Valley Airport in El Monte, (4) General William J. Fox Airfield in Lancaster, and (5) Whiteman Airport in Pacoima.

The EPA announced its final determination on October 18, 2023, that emissions of lead from aircraft that operate on leaded fuel cause or contribute to air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health and welfare under the Clean Air Act. With this final determination, the EPA now becomes subject to a duty to propose and promulgate regulatory standards for lead emissions from aircraft engines. Additionally, the Federal Aviation

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Administration (FAA) is also now subject to a duty to prescribe standards for the composition or chemical or physical properties of aircraft fuel to control or eliminate aircraft lead emissions.

Several other initiatives in support of the objective to remove lead from aviation gasoline are currently underway separate from the EPA's endangerment finding. Various general aviation industry associations, the American Petroleum Institute, and the FAA established the Eliminate Aviation Gasoline Lead Emissions (EAGLE) initiative in 2022 with the goal of eliminating aviation gasoline lead emissions before the end of 2030 or sooner. Additionally, Congressman Tony Cardenas, who has long represented the Pacoima Community shares these views and is currently working to develop the tools necessary to eliminate the use of lead fuels in the aviation industry nationally.

While the EPA's final endangerment finding is a fundamental step toward regulation of leaded aviation gasoline, it does not ban or impose restrictions on the use, sale, distribution, dispensing, and general availability of leaded fuel, nor does it establish any new control measures regarding aircraft lead emissions. However, until the EPA and FAA are able to regulate and ultimately eliminate aircraft lead emissions, there are measures that can be taken today that can minimize aviation gasoline lead emissions at the airports across the nation and particularly at the County-owned airports.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors

1. Direct the Department of Public Works to report back to the Board within 90 days with a plan to implement measures to reduce and ultimately eliminate the impacts related to the use of

leaded aviation gasoline at Whiteman airport. The report should include measures that are not limited to increasing the use and availability of 94UL; moving the aircraft runup areas further away from the runway ends; and ultimately restricting the sale of 100LL when a drop-in unleaded replacement aviation gasoline becomes commercially available for all piston-engine aircraft; and

2. Direct the Department of Public Works to implement a County administered curfew, restricting the use of the runway, during nighttime hours from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. at Whiteman Airport, except for emergency, lifesaving, firefighting, law enforcement, governmental agencies, and services to the public such as news media. Report back in 90-days with the steps necessary to implement a mandatory restriction; and
3. Direct Department of Public Health to assess existing and available blood lead level data and air quality monitoring data surrounding Whiteman Airport and make recommendations to further characterize ambient lead levels in the surrounding area. Their findings should be shared with relevant regulatory authorities, including the California Department of Public Health, for further review to ensure the safety of residents living in proximity to Whiteman airport.
4. Direct the Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office - Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch to advocate to the California Department of Public Health to undertake a study to assess statistical association between the blood lead levels of sampled children living within 1.5 miles of Whiteman Airport.