



November 19, 2025

Palomar Airport Advisory Committee
County of San Diego
1600 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: Agenda Item 6 - United Airlines Lease

Dear Chair Kaiser and Committee Members:

On behalf of the City of Carlsbad, I am writing to express our concerns about the county entering into a lease agreement with United Airlines for operations at McClellan-Palomar Airport without first obtaining an amendment to the airport's conditional use permit from the city.

As the airport's host city, the City of Carlsbad has consistently asserted its role and jurisdiction in making final land use decisions, including for new or expanded airport land uses. Our role and jurisdiction were recently affirmed in a court judgment, which requires the county to obtain an amendment to the airport's conditional use permit before expanding commercial operations at the airport, including by changing the Airport Reference Code from B-II to a higher level of operations.

Because the Airport Reference Code reflects the size of aircraft using the airport and the airport's activity level, the county's recent actions to allow larger aircraft to use the airport and to allow American Airlines to operate at the airport demonstrate a shift to a higher level of operations. Allowing United Airlines to operate at the airport would further demonstrate this shift.

Waiting to obtain a conditional use permit amendment until the Airport Reference Code change is an accomplished fact, as appears to be the county's plan, violates the court's judgment and conditional use permit terms. It also reflects poorly on the county's responsible stewardship of the airport and commitment to community engagement to identify strategies for minimizing the airport's negative impacts. The county should, therefore, delay consideration of a lease with United Airlines until the county has sought and obtained an amendment to the airport's conditional use permit.

Also concerning is the lack of sufficient equipment, personnel, and training to respond to a serious emergency at the airport, especially given the higher level of operations that the county is pursuing. Currently, emergency services at the airport are provided by a private contractor with one onsite

employee and one water truck. In the event of a serious emergency, the burden would fall on the city to supply the needed emergency services. Before further increasing the level of airport operations, the county should identify the emergency services needed to support the increased level of operations and ensure the county, not the city, bears the burden of providing those services.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Blackburn', with a stylized, flowing script.

Keith Blackburn
Mayor

cc: Members of the City Council
Geoff Patnoe, City Manager
Sheila Cobian, Assistant City Manager
Cindie McMahon, City Attorney