
Committee Meeting

of

SENATE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

"Testimony from invited guests, including representatives of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, concerning the operations and safety of Teterboro Airport in Bergen County"

LOCATION: Committee Room 1
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: June 20, 2005
9:30 a.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator Paul A. Sarlo, Chair
Senator Nia H. Gill
Senator Gerald Cardinale
Senator Joseph M. Kyrillos Jr.



ALSO PRESENT:

Carrie Calvo-Hahn
Office of Legislative Services
Committee Aide

Jonathan Boguchwal
Senate Majority
Committee Aide

Brian Alpert
Senate Republican
Committee Aide

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SENATOR PAUL A. SARLO (Chairman): Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the Senate Regulatory Oversight Committee hearing today, on Teterboro Airport.

Roll call:

Senator Gill?

SENATOR GILL: Here.

SENATOR SARLO: Senator Cardinale?

SENATOR CARDINALE: Here.

SENATOR SARLO: Senator Lesniak, unfortunately, has a conflict this morning and will not be here. He had a conflict in his schedule. And Senator Kyrillos, I believe, is coming. So we're expecting him. But we will get started.

Today's hearing is being held to examine safety issues at the Teterboro General Aviation Airport, located in South Bergen County. The history and conditions at Teterboro Airport are very well-known. Teterboro Airport is one of the busiest general aviation airports in the United States and is located in one of the most densely populated areas in the United States. Its takeoff and landing patterns pass directly over residential neighborhoods, schools, commercial complexes, and major highways.

I scheduled this hearing in the wake of two serious crashes which occurred within just months of each other. And unfortunately, in the last two years, there has been a total of five crashes, and three right here in 2005. In the first crash, a business jet overloaded with weight failed to get airborne during takeoff. The jet careened off the runway, broke through an airport fence, crossed a six-lane highway at the height of the morning rush hour, and crashed into a warehouse in which dozens of employees were

working and which was located, literally, within feet of a large high school. The fact that there was no loss of life in that first crash was a miracle.

Like me, many local residents and officials, unfortunately, believe that Teterboro Airport could potentially be a ticking time bomb waiting to go off. Furthermore, many of the local stakeholders are wondering, does someone have to die before the Federal Aviation Administrative will take action to address the safety concerns at Teterboro Airport? Safety issues must be the paramount concern for all those involved in the operation and regulation of Teterboro Airport. We all recognize that accidents do happen. However, we must ensure that every possible precaution has been taken to mitigate the impact of an accident on the surrounding area. This means that when an accident occurs at the airport, safety measures must be in place which will, first, contain the accident within the confines of the airport and, second, respond to the accident and abate its conditions as soon as possible.

Focusing only on safety issues, however, is like only seeing your doctor when you are already sick. The situation at Teterboro Airport requires preventive medicine. The only way to prevent accidents at Teterboro Airport is to reduce the number of flights. Reducing the number of flights is a commonsense solution that has long been advocated by elected officials in both sides of the aisle, including Congressman Steve Rothman, Bergen County Executive Dennis McNerney, and scores of State Legislators, county freeholders, and municipal officials.

Implementing a reduction in number of flights requires the approval of the Federal Aviation Administration in Washington, D.C. Unfortunately, the FAA has repeatedly turned a deaf ear to our plea for

help. That is why it is so important that we have the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey here today. We need the support of the Port Authority if we are to have any chance of convincing the FAA to reduce the number of flights at Teterboro Airport. Therefore, I am calling on the Port Authority to stand shoulder to shoulder with us and partner with our local county and State effort to lobby the FAA for this reduction in flights.

Today, we are joined by Port Authority Chairman Tony Coscia. And I look forward to his testimony in the hope that he will address the issues that I have raised here before you.

Mr. Coscia, please join us.

Welcome, Chairman Coscia.

ANTHONY R. COSCIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR SARLO: I know you have some other officials with you.

MR. COSCIA: I'd like to ask two gentlemen to join me, who are here with me today: William Dakota, who is our Director of Aviation, and Lanny Rider, who is the Manager of the Teterboro facility, if I may.

SENATOR SARLO: Okay.

MR. COSCIA: Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Since you are the featured speaker here, you could take as much time as needed. We will limit the rest of the speakers to five minutes. The Senate has a very busy schedule today with Budget hearings, the Budget Committee meeting, and then we have a voting session with Caucus at 12:00. So to the rest of the speakers, we will limit everyone to five minutes.

Mr. Coscia, since you made the trip down here, as much as you need. Welcome.

MR. COSCIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I did submit a written statement to the Committee, which I will work off of in the comments. But I will be very sensitive to the Committee's time, and I know there are many who want to be heard on this important issue. And I appreciate your indulgence, but don't want to monopolize everyone's time in any event.

I can't express to you how sincerely I appreciate this Committee's effort, and frankly our invitation to testify before this Committee, because I think we share a purpose. I, too, believe that we should reduce the number of flights at Teterboro Airport. And it's a situation that really cries out to all of us to work shoulder to shoulder, as you mentioned, to accomplish that.

There is a lot to this story, and I'm going to try to give you at least my sense of how we got to where we are, because I think it's essential in coming up with a plan for how we can move from here. Teterboro Airport certainly has been in existence for a very long period of time. Its initial flight was in 1919, and its history is very rich in the aviation industry of the United States. As the aviation industry has grown, as this region has grown, as the local economy has grown, so too, Teterboro Airport has grown.

And during those early years, many of the aircraft today that we all fly in were originally engineered, designed, and constructed at Teterboro. During both World Wars, Teterboro was an essential part of our nation's defense. And in 1946, the Port Authority took over the operation of

Teterboro Airport and began a process where it developed other facilities in a huge aviation network that it currently runs today. As you know, we also own and operate John F. Kennedy International Airport, Newark Liberty International Airport, and LaGuardia Airport. Together, with Teterboro, last year over 94 million people went through our facilities.

And Teterboro is a fundamental part of that network. It provides service as a reliever airport that allows for a system to work as efficiently as possible. Having said that, the fundamental importance of Teterboro Airport is the role that aviation serves in our economy. Our local economy today is far more dependent on the sale of services than manufacturing. It's a reality of the current economy that we live in, and the result of it is that for our economy to thrive, people have to be able to get here from around the country and from around the world. And Teterboro is a fundamental portion of a four-airport system that, as I mentioned, allows nearly 100 million people to come to this area each year. That is all critical.

There is also an enormous impact that Teterboro has locally. Twelve hundred people work there. There are 15,000 jobs that are created at Teterboro, as a result of Teterboro being there. Last year, \$570 million in wages were paid, almost 1.8 billion in sales activity. It is an enormous local economic engine. But we're not here to talk about economic development. I understand that.

We're here to talk about something that is far more serious. Teterboro Airport, when it was created in 1919, was in a very different place than exists today. And that's the reality that we have to face up to. During the years, the Port Authority has attempted to be the kind of good

neighbor who is sensitive to the community's concern. I'm sure there are those who would disagree with that assessment, but the reality is, is that there is a great deal that has been done. We've spent over \$48 million soundproofing schools. We've contributed a substantial amount of money to local municipalities, to charities and organizations -- all to prove that we're a good neighbor, in a business that we have to coexist under circumstances that, I would submit to the Committee, are far less than ideal.

But during that same time frame and during all of those efforts, the fact is that being more than a good neighbor is what's essential. We have to also operate a safe and secure airport. People who live near that facility deserve it, and they're entitled to it, and it's our obligation to provide it. And the Port Authority has made efforts to do that. Beginning in 1987, it's adopted a very aggressive program toward evading noise. During that time frame, the TANAAC Committee was created. That includes local elected officials. It includes FAA representatives, airport users -- all aimed at coming up with intelligent policies to reduce aircraft noise and to create environmentally friendly policies around the operation of the airport.

In 2002, Stage 1 aircraft -- that are the noisiest aircraft that are flying in general aviation -- were banned from the airport through a successful, cooperative effort. And all of those things contributed toward what I believe is clearly a history of responsiveness on the part of the Port Authority to these concerns that we're here to address today.

During my tenure in the past two years as Chair of the Port Authority, I will tell you this issue is at the very top of my priority list and

at the top of the priority list of the agency, not because I subjectively came to that conclusion, but because it's so obvious. Aviation today is a critical component of our economy. Teterboro is a critical component of our aviation system, and it is one that has an enormous amount of challenges, because of where it's located and the safety issues associated with it.

The recent incidents clearly highlighted it, but I will tell you that was very clear for many of us for quite some period of time. During the past two years, we've been involved in some pretty significant fights to protect the integrity of the airport. In those fights, I must tell you we have a very forceful ally, who I am extremely appreciative of, Congressman Steve Rothman, who has really led a fight in Washington, as has Senator Corzine and Senator Lautenberg. All have fought aggressively, as the Chairman indicates, with the FAA on trying to understand that this is, in fact, a unique set of circumstances. I know the FAA makes policy for the entire country, but in making that policy it has to recognize that Southern Bergen County -- it's proximity to New York City, a population base which is virtually unparalleled -- has to operate under somewhat different circumstances.

There are real human beings who are affected by these decisions. They're not statistical, and people have to acknowledge that. And again, I commend our representatives in Washington, particularly Congressman Rothman, for having pointed to that.

In 2003, when Indigo Airlines tried to use a FAA loophole to begin, essentially, scheduled service out of Teterboro, we all fought shoulder to shoulder to stop it. Congressman Rothman was able to get a measure in the FAA Appropriations bill that banned that kind of charter service.

Senators Corzine and Lautenberg were able to get that passed in the Senate, and we were able to stop scheduled service from getting to Teterboro. Now, clearly, to people who are concerned about the level of activity at the airport, stopping an increase may be very good, but certainly not enough. But that's the fight that we're fighting every day.

Late also in 2003, there was an attempt by our friends in the state of Washington, who have a fairly substantial airplane company from which they derive a fair amount of business, to get the FAA to get the Port Authority to lift its 38-year ban on airplanes that weigh more than 100,000 pounds. I personally went to Washington. I met with FAA administrator Marion Blakey, and I told her in no uncertain, yet extremely polite terms, that we would not allow those planes to land at Teterboro. That I would turn off the lights to the airport, but I would not allow them to land. And I made it clear to her that forfeiting FAA grants and any other penalties she could exact upon me, or the Port Authority, paled in comparison to the responsibility I felt to the citizens who lived near that airport.

As a result of that, and again Congressman Rothman's support in the Congress, we were able to stop the 100,000-pound ban from being lifted. And today we have a much safer airport because we have not allowed those things to happen. The incidents that the Chairman referred to happened after these discussions. To say that we all had the ability to tell our friends in Washington, "I told you so," is clearly the understatement of the decade. But we were able to do that. And I think we have a lot of credibility today.

Internally, at the Port Authority, the last two budgets that I have been part of approving, both of which had capital plans that were

substantial, included a very carefully thought-through capital component for Teterboro that made it crystal clear that we were not to invest any money at Teterboro that could ultimately result in expanded capacity at that airport. And we have made that a fundamental part of what we do.

Having said all of that, things have happened. And more recently, things have happened, and I agree with the Chairman. We were very, very lucky, particularly on February 2. We were extremely lucky that there wasn't loss of life and that the damage that could have happened could have been far greater. And believe me, the scope of this hearing would have been very different if we weren't that lucky. But if we take that luck and ignore it, we're all being very foolish about it. Instead, we have to be very aggressive about where we go from here.

I think by virtually all accounts, and I know there are others who will testify today on this issue, that the emergency response was extremely strong. We have an excellent mutual aid relationship with the surrounding communities, and we're now focused on expanding that: putting more money and effort into it, training additional local police and fire departments to work with us on how to deal with those kinds of emergencies. And we've taken other measures to deal with the aftermath of these recent crashes that includes purchasing additional specialized fire equipment.

One of the lessons we learned from the February 2 crash was, we sent up a truck that's referred to as a *snozzle* truck. It's a particular kind of fire apparatus that pierces an airplane and shoots foam into the airplane to stop a fire from erupting and further causing risks to firefighters and others at the scene. We were able to rush it up from Newark Liberty on

that day and it performed very well. As a result of that, I have already authorized -- and it's already there -- putting one of our existing trucks at Teterboro Airport on a permanent basis. We are purchasing a new truck, which will arrive in November, and we believe that that will add substantially to the emergency fire response.

We've also agreed that we are going to invest \$20 million on installing foam arrestor beds at the end of the two runways, as well as relining Redneck Avenue -- all aimed at dealing with the whole issue of runway safety. As you know, the incident that occurred on February 2, the plane was unable to get off the ground and lost altitude and crashed as a result of not being stopped before it hit Route 46, and then traveled across the highway to smash into a building. That kind of technology, frankly, does not exist. We are inventing it. It's our laboratory at our other facilities that's allowing us to develop technology that we think will be effective in it. But we're willing to make that investment in order to do whatever is possible to stop those kinds of incidents from happening again in the future.

All of these things, Committee members, are, I think, indications of just how serious we take this issue and how important it is for us going forward from here. But clearly, I didn't come here to tell you that everything is well, that we're doing everything we can do, and there's no need to do anything else. I agree with you. There's more we should do. And there's a great deal of accountability that we should demand from the FAA and others who are involved. But this Committee and the Port Authority Board have to join in that effort.

But what I will tell you is also true, is that the Port Authority can and should do more. I can speak to what I expect others to do. And frankly, I think we should all be fairly forceful about it. But there is a responsibility that we have and there's a certain amount of things that we can accomplish in our own house that we should do, in order to demonstrate to others that we're serious about our resolve on this issue. And to that extent, there's a few things that I'd like to share with the Committee, that I'm prepared to announce, that we're going to do and are part of our initiative to contribute to the safety of Teterboro Airport.

First of all, we've heard a great deal about Stage 2 aircraft, which are also aircraft that are at noise levels that we think are inconsistent with the quality-of-life commitment we've made to the citizens around Teterboro. We will ban Stage 2 aircraft. I sent a letter to the FAA on June 8, indicating that we are changing our rules for the operation of those aircraft at the airport, and we will institute the legal means necessary to ban those aircraft by September 1 of 2005. For sure, we will be fought by many on this issue, but I am not asking for anyone's permission. We're banning those aircraft, and we will do whatever's in our legal capacity to do it. I understand what we're putting at risk to do that, but we're prepared to do it nonetheless.

Also, as many of you know, we instituted a voluntary ban on overnight flights at Teterboro Airport. I can't imagine anything more inconsistent with a quality-of-life commitment than allowing jet airplanes to land at a fairly hectic rate during the hours between midnight and 6:00 a.m. in the morning. At present, we have fairly good adherence to our voluntary restraint, but there are a number of major exceptions. The single largest

exception which we have granted is to the Federal Reserve Bank, that flies dozens of jets in every night. It accounts for almost 50 percent of the overnight flights at the airport. It's a significant volume.

Last week, I sent a letter to the Federal Reserve Bank indicating that we no longer exempt them from the voluntary restraints for overnight flight, and that we are asking them to work with us immediately on creating a mechanism through which we can eliminate the use of the Federal Reserve Bank of Teterboro Airport, as a way of bringing checks to be processed in the New York Metropolitan region. Please understand, the Federal Reserve Bank is performing a service that is vital to the economy. I understand that. But those flights are not essential. In an electronic age where we can process checks and process financial documents through various electronic means, I do not want to put people at risk. I don't want to congest the airport. I don't want to disturb the quality of peoples' lives for that reason. There has got to be a better plan, and we will find it.

I am certain that with this Committee's support and the support of many others who I know feel strongly about this issue that we will move the Federal Reserve Bank flights out of it, which would result in a 50 percent reduction in overnight flights and, we believe, a significant reduction, ultimately.

The other initiative that we're going to embark on is, the current weight limit that I indicated previously is 100,000. In the spirit that every good defense requires a good offense, we are beginning the process today of reducing the weight limitation at Teterboro Airport from 100,000 pounds to 80,000 pounds. Although relatively few planes would be effected by it directly, it clearly sends a message that we will not allow

any further incursions on our weight limitation ban. In fact, we're moving in the other direction. And we think that that will do further to reduce the number of flights and enhance the airport's operation.

Finally, what we're also going to do is, we're going to initiate a number of increases in the current charges that we assess at the airport for landing fees. And we're going to do that with a couple of objectives in mind. Clearly, we are looking to create an operating environment where those who use the airport understand the significant cost of operating it, significant cost, in part, generated by our unwillingness to operate the airport other than at the safest, possible standards that are applicable. And if additional capital investment is required to do that, so be it. And we're going to increase landing fees to reflect that.

But I'm going to couple with the increase in landing fees a resolution, that I'm going to be asking the Port Authority Board to approve, that will require that all incremental revenue that is generated by the Port Authority at Teterboro Airport is invested in Teterboro Airport; but expressly not to be used for increase in capacity, only for safety and security projects, and there should be an absolute ban within the Port Authority from using any profitability from Teterboro Airport anywhere else in Port Authority operations.

I don't want anyone in the community or in any other venue to believe that we are raising money at Teterboro simply for our own profitability. That is untrue. I won't support it. To the extent that it's ever been done, I promise you I will reverse it. And to the extent that we have the legal authority to do so, those funds will be used to fund those projects -- whether it's emergency response training, whether it's additional mutual

aid cooperation agreements that are necessary -- because we believe that that airport does visit a significant amount of economic hardship from a standpoint of security and safety concerns on those who live nearby.

Having said all of that, the truth is that, and I mentioned this earlier, that we rely on aviation. For me to simply say that we are going to eliminate Teterboro Airport would be irresponsible. It's also not something I can accomplish. And I want to be truthful with the people who are adhering to what I'm trying to convey here. The reality is that we rely on aviation in this area. It's a linchpin of our economic system, and we have to maintain that in ways that are intelligent.

But I'll tell you, we've had this phenomena here that's gone on throughout the region, not just in aviation, but in other areas. We have to do something to increase capacity. The only effective way to substantially reduce the number of flights at Teterboro is to increase capacity somewhere else in the region. And that's something that we're dedicated to.

Chairman, I chair an agency that has responsibility for a whole lot of things. We have a port that last year did over \$100 billion in cargo, and it's vital to the economy. Yet we dump thousands of trucks onto congested roads that contribute to pollution and congestion. We run a train system -- the PATH System -- that serves 50 million people, and we do it with the oldest car fleet in the country. We have bridges and tunnels that serve 125 million people, yet people wait for two hours to get through the Lincoln Tunnel. The fact is that for many, many years we've ignored the hard steps to significant infrastructure changes. But we're reversing that trend.

I'm pleased to say to you -- and I know it's well beyond the scope of the focus of this hearing -- but we're investing \$650 million in a freight rail system to alleviate those trucks. We, a few months ago, agreed to spend \$800 million buying brand-new PATH car systems to improve that system. And many of you know of our partnership with New Jersey Transit to build the ARC Tunnel to alleviate the congestion at our crossings. Well, that same level of leadership is what we need to do to deal with the aviation challenges that this region has.

So we're going to initiate a study to look for ways to build additional capacity in our aviation business that will alleviate the pressure on Teterboro, yet not do it in a way that makes Newark, Kennedy, and LaGuardia unworkable. And our beginning point in any such study is not to recreate the Teterboro problem. We don't want to revisit 1919, build an airport next to someone else's neighborhood. We want to build capacity in a place that's consistent with the quality-of-life responsibilities that we have to people who live in and around this region.

So having said that, we're embarking on some pretty bold initiatives to try to build additional capacity in the system. And it won't be done overnight. I don't want to promise anyone that. But if we don't start today, we'll never get it finished. And if we want to look at the residents around Teterboro and make commitments to them as to what we can do, long term, to alleviate a problem that they've suffered through for a long time, we have to be willing to take on very difficult, long-term solutions.

I'm hopeful that all of these initiatives that I've talked about today, in total, will, first of all, reduce the number of flights at Teterboro Airport, which is our absolute priority. And then secondly, we'll build an

intelligent system that, long term, will let the region be viable from an economic standpoint.

I'd like to thank you for giving me the opportunity, and I certainly would be happy to entertain questions.

SENATOR CARDINALE: Mr. Chairman?

SENATOR SARLO: Just one second, Ger.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, thank you for being here. And I must say this: Under your unparalleled leadership at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, you have always been willing to face the music. You've been into my district on numerous occasions. After every crash, you've arrived. You've met with not only elected officials, but you have met with concerned residents in public hearings. And at times, that could be difficult, because people are so outraged.

There's not a day that goes by, you pick up a local paper or a statewide paper to see what you're doing for not only the economy, but the transportation network. And throughout New Jersey, your agency, a bi-state agency, has really stepped up to the plate big time helping North Jersey and our transportation issues, especially in the area of rail.

And today you bring with you a series of recommendations which I believe goes a long way. It's the first time we've ever heard recommendations such as these from any Port Authority official, from any tier. So kudos to you for coming here with these recommendations today.

MR. COSCIA: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR SARLO: It goes a long way. You will have the naysayers out there. You will have elected officials on both sides of the aisle. Some of them Gerry and I know very well, who will stand there and

say things, "Close the airport." We all realize that will never happen; it is an important part of our economy. But there are things that we can be doing to make it a safer airport, and to give some satisfaction to the people that live minutes away, across the street from that airport -- that we're doing everything we possibly can to make it a safest airport. So I commend you on that.

I do have a series of questions. But before I do that, I'll--
Senator Cardinale has some questions.

SENATOR CARDINALE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, through you.

Like the Chairman, I would like to compliment your presentation very much. I can appreciate how much work has gone into and how much thought has gone into trying to make this a safer facility for all of us. The February incident made us all very painfully aware, one, how lucky we were that, during rush hour, not more injuries, personal injuries, occurred. And also how vulnerable we are to this being at the edge of a major commuter traffic facility.

I know that you have committed to putting up these light-weight concrete barriers, which sound like a very good idea. I'm a little troubled that it hasn't already been done. Can you give us a sense of the complexity of doing that, how many runways would have to be fitted out with those, particularly those abutting? Let me start by asking, how many runways do you have that actually, if you have an overflight, would actually cross Route 46?

MR. COSCIA: Well, Senator, there are two runways where we would be installing the foam arrestor beds, both of the runways where the

overrun distance is relatively short in comparison. There are, obviously, two runways there that crisscross, creating four basic runway patterns. Two of them -- the barrier between -- when you leave the runway and you get to either a major road, as in the case of Redneck Avenue, or a highway, as in the case of Route 46, is a barrier that we would like to be greater, in terms of distance of feet. And both of those locations is where we're going to install the foam arrestor beds. Those are the places where, I think, it's most critical. The overrun ability at the other two ends of the runway is a much longer distance of open space, that we can create enough of an ability to buffer any aircraft that might overrun the runway.

Having said that, I understand your concern about why isn't it done already. I have to tell you that it doesn't please me to be here today to say that we are developing a technology in the aftermath of a crash, as opposed to before one. But in the defense of why that hasn't been done, there isn't an airport facility -- and there are many that have limited overrun capacity such as ours -- I think the statistic is somewhere around 80 percent of all runways in the United States don't have a sufficient buffer, because they simply were built around population areas that grew around them. But we have developed this foam arrestor bed technology really at our larger airports, and that gave us an ability to experiment with technology that might work. There are limited options here. So from an engineering standpoint, we were narrowing in on the option that would be the most effective. Deploying it now and going through the engineering studies to make certain we don't make matters worse, as opposed to better, is somewhat time-consuming. But it's a real priority. We're hopeful that within a year we're going to be able to install these systems. But we've told

people 2007, to be honest about the fact that there's a number of testing and analysis that we need to do before it can be fully deployed.

But I have to tell you this is not a technology that has been around for many years, and that we simply chose, at a financial prudence, not to install it. We will install it and then others will follow. We're very comfortable, based on analysis that's gone on at the larger airports, in using the technology to slow down landing aircraft, as opposed to taking off aircraft that are much larger, that it's going to work and it's going to work very effectively. But had we developed this technology three years ago and deployed it three years ago, I certainly would have been more pleased than I am being here today telling you we're doing it now.

SENATOR CARDINALE: One of the things surrounding that incident, that seems to pervade all of what I've read on this, is that there was a balancing problem with respect to the weight in the aircraft, so that it was front-loaded, so to speak. Are there any safety measures that you can take, as the operator of the airport, that would ensure that those kinds of problems don't occur again?

MR. COSCIA: Well, I think -- and there's been a lot of speculation about the February 2 crash -- I don't believe the MTSB report has been issued in final yet. So we're all sort of operating on things that we've heard may or may not have contributed to the crash, and I've heard that as well, Senator. There are a limited number of things we could do as an airport operator.

Clearly, the air side of aviation is exclusively the jurisdiction of the FAA. Although we have a number of procedures in place for people who fly aircraft in and out of the airport that deal with safety issues, the

actual operation of an aircraft -- anything we do -- would have to be voluntary compliance. We have no real way of enforcing it, other than enforcing elements of operation of the aircraft such as noise restrictions, and things like that where we have some greater ability under existing FAA regulations. So our ability to create operating protocols for aircraft at the airport is limited. Although, frankly, I think we can be a very forceful conduit to the FAA on areas of concern. And this is certainly all of the elements that contributed to the two most recent incidents. It's our intention, once that information is all made available, to circle back to the FAA and make clear any shortcomings in their regulations that we think need to be addressed.

SENATOR CARDINALE: I want to get back to these barriers. What do they look like? Is this a wall or is this a series of--

MR. COSCIA: They're concrete blocks, essentially, that when the wheel of the airplane hits it they expand and they slow down the airplane. Essentially, it's a foam block that reacts to pressure by enlarging and then, ultimately, creating kind of a resistance mechanism that slows down the airplane and, ultimately, stops it. The problem is you can't put a barrier up, because that would be worse. So what you need to do is something that will only react on pressure and then react in a manner on pressure that will slow the airplane down, as opposed to trying to bring it to a complete stop at once.

SENATOR CARDINALE: Well, the plane was brought to a complete stop when it hit a warehouse.

MR. COSCIA: Well, by a building.

SENATOR CARDINALE: It hit a warehouse.

MR. COSCIA: By a building.

SENATOR CARDINALE: Now, it would seem to me that it is far preferable that we had a wall, before people got to Route 46, that actually stopped an aircraft. Now that might destroy an aircraft. It might create a number of problems, but the aircraft is going to be destroyed anyway. If it gets across Route 46, you're going to destroy a lot of lives in another circumstance. Why don't we do something like that, which could be done in a relatively short period of time, while you're developing all of the rest of the technology, which I guess you're trying to stop that airplane without doing too much damage. But I think that we have to accept some damage to the aircraft rather than accept the damage to what could be a huge number of folks who are just driving innocently back and forth to work, or shopping, or whatever.

MR. COSCIA: Senator, I understand your comment. A couple of things, let me say, in response. First, and I don't consider this to let me or us off the hook, the ability to erect that kind of a barrier clearly would violate existing FAA rules as to our operation of the airport. There are expressed regulations that do not allow us to create those kind of barriers. And the engineering reason, for why it is deemed to be imprudent to do that, is really not the-- It's really not protecting the airplane itself. It's the likelihood of an explosion or fire that would result by having an airplane, fully fueled, hitting some sort of obstruction as it's either trying to take off or land. And those experts, aviation engineers, who have looked at this issue for many years have ultimately concluded that that kind of barrier at any airport -- you won't see it at any airport in the United States -- is

ultimately less safe than creating some kind of mechanism that would ultimately slow it down.

The optimum solution, I will tell you, is the one I can't deliver, which is to take that 300-foot piece of grass that exists between the end of the our runway and Route 46 and make it a thousand feet. That we can't do. And as I mentioned to you, 80 percent of the airports in the United States do not have what is a relatively recent barrier requirement of 1,000 feet, and all work through these same issues. Frankly, it's true at some other airports as well.

The foam arrestor bed technology was deemed to be the best of both worlds, because what it does is essentially creates that barrier, but only on impact. And then it gradually sort of builds up in terms of the expanding foam around the aircraft to slow it down. If an airplane going at that speed were to hit any kind of a concrete wall or barrier, there would be an immediate explosion. No one on the plane would have any chance of survival. So in a very difficult business with few options, those who know far more from an engineering standpoint about the subject than do I, have convinced me pretty thoroughly that a barrier would not work. And as I said at the outset, the FAA would never let us erect it in any event.

SENATOR CARDINALE: I'm not going to argue with the engineers, because I have no engineering background.

MR. COSCIA: That makes two of us.

SENATOR CARDINALE: But if you just shorten your runway by 700 feet, to add to that 300 to give you a thousand, what would be the impact on air traffic? How much air traffic would you lose by having 700 feet less on your runway?

MR. COSCIA: Well, the runway lengths are at a distance that's deemed to be safe for aircraft of the type that land there. Shortening the runway--

SENATOR CARDINALE: But you say you're going to try to start diminishing weights and other things. Have you considered that? And if you have considered it and rejected it, I'd like to know the reasoning.

MR. COSCIA: We've considered it and we've rejected it based on the notion that the current length of those runways are essential to the reliever nature of that airport. The truth is that shortening those runways -- and again, I will start with the same precursor -- that shortening those runways would undoubtedly require FAA approval that I think would be very difficult to obtain. But putting aside the FAA as our primary antagonist here, shortening those runways appreciably to the extent that you suggest would not allow airplanes that do use that airport regularly to land there safely. The challenge of a pilot landing on a shorter runway is much greater. And as a result of that, from a safety standpoint, I think we might be taking a step in the wrong direction.

If your suggestion is-- And I understand this, because, frankly, it's intuitive, so I think most people would think this. If we shorten the runways to 4,000 feet or 5,000 feet, which would be the next step of significantly changing what kind of an airplane could land there, we would essentially be, defacto, closing the airport. Because most of the jets that require a runway of that length wouldn't be able to land on a 4,000- or 5,000-foot runway, similar to what exists at some municipal airports today. So essentially we would be shutting down Teterboro Airport, but through a reverse mechanism. I'm telling you we just don't have either the legal

ability or practical ability to do that today. I think a modest decrease in the size of the runway to that extent would have the same airplanes land there, but under less-safe operating conditions.

SENATOR CARDINALE: Thank you.

MR. COSCIA: Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, Senator Cardinale.

Senator Gill.

SENATOR GILL: Chairman, being sensitive to the safety concerns, I'd like to know if you reduce the number of flights to Teterboro, will that reduction cause an increase in flights to other areas, like Essex or Morristown?

MR. COSCIA: I think that it depends on the type of aircraft that are ultimately affected by it. We talked about a couple of things here. We talked about banning Stage 2 aircraft. Banning Stage 2 aircraft, reducing weight limitations from 100,000 pounds to 80,000 pounds, the Federal Reserve requirement, most of those reductions are less likely to have an impact on airports that are smaller than Teterboro, and more likely to have an airport (*sic*) on our facilities where people are going to try to fly to some of those facilities. However, and this is why I mentioned the issue of capacity, at some point we are undoubtedly going to bump up against the need to create additional capacity or to make it more difficult to fly into this region. So that the most truthful answer I can give you is, there's nothing we've talked about today that would put significant pressure on airports smaller than Teterboro. At this stage, they're probably going to make it less convenient for people to fly into Teterboro and create additional pressure at our major airports. But as we reduce the reliance on

Teterboro Airport, if we don't build additional capacity, exactly what you suggest will occur.

SENATOR GILL: And what I suggest would occur is that you would increase the capacity in Essex or Morristown.

MR. COSCIA: We don't operate Essex or Morristown Airports, other agencies do. But will pilots look to land there? Essex is a different story. Its runways are much shorter. So most of the aircraft we're talking about here wouldn't have that option. But Morristown, White Plains, Macarthur, a number of other places, clearly would feel that effect.

SENATOR GILL: So that even though I understand that the Port Authority does not control those airports, we're talking about policies that would be, or perhaps, implemented by the Port Authority -- that would have a result in having an impact on those areas.

MR. COSCIA: Senator, you are 100 percent correct. In fact, I think what makes this responsibility as serious as it is, is that the decisions that we make, relative to our aviation business, have a repercussion on a variety of different communities and a variety of different businesses. And for me to focus solely on what's in the Port Authority's jurisdiction is to be, I think, unfair to the responsibility that I have and we have as an agency. The truth is that what we do will affect all these other places. And if we make decisions, it does us no good, as I mentioned, to repeat the mistakes that were made in the past, of creating other problems where problems exist today. Which is why we think the study should begin with the notion that we do not want to create additional capacity near a populated area or in a place where we're simply going to just replace our problems with Teterboro with the problems in some other community.

So the reason why I think this study makes sense is that these things do require time to work through, and we're going to have to look at some difficult decisions. There are facilities that are underutilized. Stewart Airport, in Newburgh, New York, is underutilized. The facilities near McGuire are underutilized. Both are in places that are far (*sic*) densely populated than Newark or than Essex County or Bergen County, or any of the places we're currently relying on. Now, would it be less convenient for people who are flying into those facilities than flying into Teterboro? That's for sure. But that convenience has to be balanced against what's -- doing the best job we can and making these facilities as safe as possible.

But I am personally extremely sensitive to not just shifting this problem to another location, regardless of whether it's under Port Authority jurisdiction.

SENATOR GILL: Thank you.

And through you, Mr. Chair, I just have one more question. The purpose of that question was, that if you could make that determination now -- and there may be some proactive things or proactive procedures that could go on in these other areas where it may have an increase, so that we kind of address it in advance or at least incorporate it into the structure. And I'm happy to hear that you are going to make those kind of considerations.

MR. COSCIA: Yes, Senator. Absolutely.

SENATOR GILL: Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, Senator Gill.

Just to expand upon what Senator Gill had commented on in her questions. Although this issue is parochial at Teterboro, to some of us,

we do all have statewide responsibilities here. And the diversion of aircraft or reduction in capacity could have an impact on some of these other general aviation airports. Are those general aviation airports under the jurisdiction of the DOT or FAA? What are some of these other general aviation airports? For example, Morristown, who does that fall under the jurisdiction of?

MR. COSCIA: Well, on the air side, we all operate under the FAA's jurisdiction. On the land side, in terms of the airports themselves, it's a variety: Some are county operated, as is the case in Essex County. Some are privately operated, as I believe is the case in Sussex, although I'm not 100 percent certain of that. And some are municipal operations, is the case. There are quite a few air facilities throughout New Jersey that range from relatively small, general aviation airports that have relatively short runways and not a whole lot of terminal capacity or other things; to much more expansive facilities.

I don't think we have, as a region, looked at aviation capacity in an intelligent way to try to plan it for the next generation, or even, frankly, for this generation. We tend to-- And although I serve as chair of the Port Authority, I'm very sensitive to my role as being New Jersey's representative in that bi-state agency. But as a regional entity, we tend to -- we should not focus solely on a particular political geography, such as New Jersey. If you begin on Long Island and make a circle, you take in a whole lot of different facilities -- Macarthur and White Plains and Stewart and a whole bunch of other places -- that should be managed so that we don't create a concentration. And I think that that's a big part of this.

SENATOR SARLO: Will your partners at the Port Authority New York and New Jersey -- the New York officials there -- is there a reluctance on their part to look at this potential reduction and diversion, or are they just as supportive to look at this -- take into consideration that it's going to have impact on the airports?

MR. COSCIA: I think the answer is that they are very supportive. As to the motivations for their support, I'll leave it to anyone's imagination. But the truth is that this is -- we're all sailing on the same ship and, at some point, I think people intelligently come to that conclusion. If people don't want to incur two-hour delays on landing at LaGuardia or Kennedy, they're going to have to come up with an aviation system that works. This is not a problem you can push to someone else's backyard.

SENATOR SARLO: With regards to flight patterns -- and I know this all falls under the jurisdiction of the FAA, and you talked a little bit earlier about different flight controls that fall under the FAA -- there was an e-mail sent out to approximately 150,000 pilots across the country, from the FAA, talking about takeoffs and landings at Teterboro -- that it's so critical that they have a clear understanding of the altitudes.

MR. COSCIA: I'm familiar with that.

SENATOR SARLO: I'm assuming that doesn't happen at every airport, so that means it's pretty serious when you're landing or taking off at Teterboro Airport. You have to be very cognizant of what's happening around you with LaGuardia, Kennedy, and Newark. Any thoughts on that, that the FAA would step up to the plate and send this e-mail out nationwide? Is that an issue?

MR. COSCIA: I don't believe it to be an issue, and I know that FAA directive and the e-mail was largely prompted by reports from pilots themselves. In terms of actual FAA and tower monitoring, I don't think there were any problems relative to altitude separation or other issues. This was, I guess, an issue that arose out of the FAA being proactive about reports that it had gotten from pilots who had conveyed different sentiments about operating conditions in or around the airport. But the truth, Senator, is that from a operational standpoint, the skies over the New York Metropolitan area are very congested. There is no question about it.

And as we talked about building capacity, we also have to talk about, essentially, the ability to control air space in a way where you can manage that kind of air traffic. It's clearly a challenge, although I don't believe that directive was fundamentally based on any inherent operating problem relative to altitude separation at the airport.

SENATOR SARLO: You had talked about the Stage 2 aircraft, and I commend you for making that recommendation -- a reduction of about 15,000 movements. Those Stage 2 aircrafts, are they all corporate jets? What kind of jets are the Stage 2 aircrafts?

MR. COSCIA: I'd say it's mixed. Predominantly, they're corporate jets, but there are a variety of different aircraft that, I guess, would exceed the decibels levels and qualify as Stage 2. But the predominant number of them are corporate jets.

SENATOR SARLO: And the nighttime movements in and out of the airport today, are they primarily for organ transplants at Hackensack Hospital and some of the surrounding hospitals, as well as the Federal Reserve Bank, or is there still corporate jets landing through the nights?

MR. COSCIA: There's a nighttime voluntary ban that I think is adhered to pretty religiously by virtually everyone. The bulk of the overnight flights -- by overnight, I define it as between midnight and 6:00 a.m. in the morning. And then if you expand it to 10:00 a.m. (*sic*) to 7:00 in the morning, the bulk of those flights fall into the category of either the Federal Reserve Bank, which is an enormous operation of flying Lear jets in and out on a pretty regular basis; and Quest Diagnostics, and a variety of other medical-related uses of the airport. The medical-related uses at the airport we are not looking to curtail--

SENATOR SARLO: I understand.

MR. COSCIA: --but we are focusing on the Fed right now.

SENATOR SARLO: In some of the preliminary research that our staff has compiled for us -- and it indicated that the DOT did a study back in 1996 talking about the economic output. It was some 459 million back then at Teterboro Airport. Is there a more recent study that has been conducted by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey which could demonstrate to us the economic output from this airport?

MR. COSCIA: There was one that was completed in 2004. And I mentioned some of the statistics from that, that included 15,000 jobs that are directly resulting from the presence of Teterboro Airport. In that location, 1,200 people on the airport itself, \$670 million in wages, and 1.8 billion in sales activity in the region. There's no question, Senator, you could make a phenomenal case on both a local level and a regional level to suggest how critically important the airport is from an economic standpoint.

SENATOR SARLO: I know you had told me earlier that when you conclude your testimony and the questions from the members of the

Committee you need to -- you have a busy day ahead of you -- and you need to move on. I know they'll be some more people here to testify.

I know one question that's going to come up, and I see Assemblyman Scalera is here. He actually worked with me and Senator Coniglio, who's back here, with regard to getting \$300,000 for this environmental study that was done about two years ago. It's almost two years ago, August. I understand that's not off the ground yet, because there's some coordination problems between the Port Authority and the DEP. What's--

MR. COSCIA: We think, Senator, that those issues have been resolved. And within the next 60 to 90 days, we believe that those monitoring mechanisms will be deployed and being used. But I understand the Assemblyman has, on a number of occasions, expressed his concern about ensuring that that is put up and running as quickly as possible. We have, I believe, resolved any outstanding issues, and that equipment should be deployed.

I thank you, and Senator Cuniglio, and the Assemblyman for having worked to get us the resources to do it. DEP and the Port Authority, I think, have gotten to a point where we have all that operational at this point. And as I said, clearly at the outside, within the next three months, that the air monitoring devices should all be deployed.

SENATOR SARLO: And a final question is: You outlined a series of capital improvements in addition to a series of recommendations in your efforts to take on the FAA. With regards to the capital improvements, how do we overcome -- and this is going to be a good public relations campaign -- how do we overcome the perception that every time you do

move one piece of earth, move one fence line, the cries go out, the rumors fly that you're expanding the airport? Or is the Port Authority going to be willing to undertake that massive public relations campaign to assure people you're making it a safer airport and you're not expanding? There's a reluctance on many people to trust the Port Authority. As I said earlier, you have taken it to another level the last two years, the trust. I know, with the elected officials on both sides of the aisle, it's been unbelievable. But I think we need to take it beyond us now and get it to the people who live and work near the airport.

MR. COSCIA: Senator, the quick answer to your question is yes. We will and we understand that's our responsibility. I've made it clear internally, and I think people understand this, that I have an enormous amount of information available to me. And certainly there are members in this Committee who can get to that information as well.

People who live or work around Teterboro Airport, they're only source of information is looking up and seeing planes land at intervals that seem pretty amazing. It's those people who have to be convinced that when we spend money on Teterboro Airport in order to beef up a runway, it's to make it safer, not to expand it. And there's a clear line of definition of projects that increase capacity, and those just simply make it safer. We have to do a better job at selling that component of it.

SENATOR SARLO: Okay, thank you.

Any other questions from the Committee?

A follow-up.

SENATOR GILL: I know you said, Chairman, that we're all in a ship together. We're probably all in the same plane, just so we get it.
(laughter)

MR. COSCIA: Thank you. It's a much better--

SENATOR GILL: And I think your testimony was very interesting and very informative. And I thank you very much.

MR. COSCIA: Thank you.

Thank you, Senator. Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: So just to fully understand, we're talking about \$20 million for these foam arrestor beds. We're talking about the realignment of Redneck Road. We're talking about the emergency response equipment, including a snozzle truck, and a coordinated and documented emergency response plan. In addition, recommendations are going to be to reduce weights of aircraft from 100,000 down to 80,000.

MR. COSCIA: That's correct.

SENATOR SARLO: The ban of Stage 2 aircraft--

MR. COSCIA: That's also correct.

SENATOR SARLO: --15,000 movements; and imposing the voluntary curfew on the Federal Reserve Bank, which currently they are exempt from. And the Port Authority and the Commissioners are looking into increasing landing fees to generate revenue that will be put back into the Teterboro Airport and not used to offset other capital costs.

Well, thank you.

MR. COSCIA: Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: I think it's a very aggressive agenda, but it's the first time we've heard of an agenda of this magnitude from the Port

Authority. I think that's a testament to you and to Bill and to Lanny, who are standing here with you, and all the Port Authority officials -- for coming forward today.

So I thank you for your time and your efforts.

MR. COSCIA: Thank you, Senator. Thank you for the opportunity.

SENATOR SARLO: I see Senator Coniglio is here. He's been working closely with me. No need to testify, but, Senator Coniglio, thank you for attending.

We do have a statement that will be logged with OLS, a statement from Congressman Steve Rothman, who has been calling for an immediate 25 percent reduction in flights to Teterboro Airport. He has been our main advocate in Washington. And 25 percent would get us to the pre-2001 movements. So I thank Congressman Rothman. I know he has representatives here today. We do have some local -- Adam Slater is here from Congressman Rothman. I thank you, and your testimony will be made part of the record for today.

I know we have some Assembly people here that would like to speak. I see Assemblywoman Weinberg; Assemblyman Scalera, from District 36; and Assemblyman Johnson and Assemblyman Gordon. So if you guys want to all come up and--

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON FROM AUDIENCE: And girls.

SENATOR SARLO: And girls, of course.

I announce Assemblywoman Weinberg first.

A S S E M B L Y W O M A N L O R E T T A W E I N B E R G:

Thank you very much. Thank you, Senator Sarlo and members of the

Committee, for actually holding this hearing. It is a great step forward in what has been, for me, about a 10-year battle with Teterboro Airport. And I know that our two senators from Bergen County and certainly my colleagues, to my right and left here, know the geographic situation of Teterboro Airport. But let me just point out that Hackensack Hospital sits at the highest point in Hackensack, along with a variety of high-rise apartment buildings. And it is not an overstatement to say that you could stand at one of their top windows and wave at the pilot and see the numbers on the airplane when the pilots take off and land at Teterboro. That is not an overstatement.

I was, too, very pleased to hear Chairman Coscia's remarks, and I will talk about one thing in particular. We have tried for eight years to talk to the Federal Reserve about those overnight flights. And as Chairman Coscia said, in these days of electronic checking accounts-- I know I don't even get cancelled checks anymore, which always annoys me when I'm trying to balance my checking account. So I don't know what it is they're flying in and out between midnight and 6:00 a.m. But it would seem to me, for quality-of-life -- and I'm not talking about safety issues -- but quality-of-life issues, that those flights could be really minimized, because they are the largest percentage, other than obvious medical emergencies, the largest percentage of overnight flights in and out of Teterboro.

We've spent several years contacting our Federal representatives and, up until today, we have never gotten cooperation from either the Port Authority or the management at Teterboro Airport. So I am really delighted to hear what went on the record today from Chairman

Coscia, which meant that I didn't have to give a lot of the testimony I was about to give.

But I would like to point out one other thing, and that is the security issues at Teterboro Airport. There seems to be very little accounting on licensure of aircraft. I read very recently in the press that the FAA was going to start monitoring that. There are aircraft and aircraft companies that fly in and out of that airport and use the licenses of other charter companies, so that they don't have their own licensing. And I'm not sure who looks at these people, whether there are security checks or background checks. But that was the one aspect of my concerns that I did not hear Chairman Coscia refer to. It doesn't mean they're not looking into it.

But I did, as I said, read a press report that the FAA was going to come down on that. But it would seem to me that, immediately, Teterboro should make certain that any charter airline that flies in or out of that airport has its own licensing, with all the requirements that go along with that kind of licensing, so that they are not operating under somebody else's license, which nobody knows whether or not they meet all security and safety requirements. So I think that's the only other important issue.

Nobody responsible has ever called for the closing of that airport. Those of us who are elected officials understand the economic engine, understand the reality of Teterboro Airport. We want to make sure that, number one, it is safe, not only for the pilots and the residents around the area; that it is secure, vis-à-vis, post-911. Because I have true worries about that. And third of all, that it does not as negatively effect the quality of life of people living around there. And if we can ban those midnight to

6:00 a.m. flights, or keep them to a minimum, that will go a long way to improving quality of life.

So with that, again, Senator Sarlo, thank you for calling these hearings; and hopefully we will all monitor to make sure that the promises given here today are going to be realities very shortly.

SENATOR SARLO: Assemblywoman Weinberg, you make a very valid point on -- with regard to licensing. And you read the same reports that I did in the paper that the aircraft that was involved in the Route 46 crash, this past winter, actually did not hold a license to operate that plane. They were actually borrowing a license -- which is a common practice in FAA-- They were actually borrowing a license from another airline carrier. So I appreciate your bringing that up.

And any comments or questions that are brought forward by anyone here today, we're going to make sure we get them documented and get them off to the Port Authority, so we could get answers back to each and everyone of you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Okay. Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Assemblyman Scalera.

A S S E M B L Y M A N F R E D E R I C K S C A L E R A: Thank you, Chairman and members of the Committee, for holding this hearing on Teterboro Airport today.

I'd actually like to thank the Port Authority Chairman and his Government Affairs Department, because they have been quite responsible in returning phone calls to my office and working forward on a lot of these issues. I'd like to cover some of the things the Chairman talked about that I -- but also go back to-- Back in 2004, when we were having a problem with

the possibility of the over-100,000-pound limit there, the legislative delegation in Bergen sent a letter off to the FAA chairman, which we have still never gotten an answer or a response to today. That has not been true with the Port Authority. And they have stepped up to the plate and supported us on those issues.

Coming forward to that, we had the crash this past February. And thanks to Governor Codey, we had an immediate meeting a few days afterwards in his office. And we talked about the foam barriers, which we heard today that Chairman Coscia is addressing. And I did not know that today, so I am thankful that we are going to be getting those.

And due to my other response -- I'm the Deputy Chief of the Fire Department in Nutley. I also responded equipment on that date. We did have a lack of equipment at Teterboro Airport. And I asked for a piece of equipment to be relocated there from another airport, which has also been done, which is the piercing nozzle, as he called the snozzle crash truck. Because we need to be able to respond to those incidents better out there.

And I think the Port Authority is stepping up to the plate and has been working with us on these issues. We need to support them now and make sure we're documenting it from this. And I'm asking that this report from this Committee today also be sent to the FAA. I know we won't get an answer, such as the letter we sent last time, but letting them know that we have concerns here in New Jersey and support the Port Authority on their changes of Stage 2 aircraft, reducing to 80,000, the overnight flights; and working together with them to support the initiatives.

As you know, I represent Bergen, Passaic, and Essex. And if you're to travel over into Nutley -- I tell everyone on the Bergen side that

talks to me -- come over to my house in Nutley. We have the same flight pattern that comes over Essex County, except we don't have the landing itself. But we have the takeoff pattern, which goes on all night long, including these overnight flights. So it's not just the quality in Bergen, it's the quality in North Jersey. And we need to address this, work towards this.

And I want to thank the Committee today. I want to thank the Port Authority. But I think we need to address these things with the FAA. Our Congress personnel -- especially Congressman Rothman, who in September of '04 was able, through a loophole in funding, to ban those over-100,000s -- I think we need to work with him now to get it down to the 80,000s, and work with him with the Port Authority to do that.

And I thank you for having this hearing today.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, Assemblyman.

Assemblyman Gordon.

A S S E M B L Y M A N R O B E R T M. G O R D O N: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, first, for your leadership on this issue, and for holding these hearings. And I'd also like to add my thanks to Chairman Coscia and the staff of the Port Authority for their support on trying to improve the safety of this airport.

Much of our attention in recent weeks have been focused on the accidents that have occurred just in 2005. What I'd like to do is just take this opportunity to review a longer safety record. I'd like to look back during the past 25 years. Teterboro Airport is now, in terms of traffic volume, one of the busiest general aviation reliever airports in the nation.

And despite that fact, the airport has no effective buffer, and is surrounded by residential communities and two State highways. Consequently, Teterboro may be one of the most unsafe general aviation airports in the nation. The facility, if you go back to the records, has had one major accident every year for the past several years. Some have involved injuries and fatalities.

Just since January of this year, there have been three plane accidents at Teterboro. These incidents make it clear how dangerous operations at Teterboro have become. What was once a place for propeller-driven general aviation aircraft is now a facility utilized by larger, faster, and more dangerous jets.

Just let's look back at the safety record over the last 25 years. Just a few weeks ago, on May 31, a small plane crashed at the end of the runway at Teterboro and caught fire, and the pilot sustained serious injuries. On March 8, 2005, a business jet overshot the runway and stopped in snow and mud. Fortunately, both passengers and two crew members walked away uninjured. On February 2, 2005, a 40,000-pound corporate jet carrying 11 people ran off the end of the runway during an aborted takeoff, shot across six lanes of traffic on Route 46, and slammed into a warehouse. A passenger hit in a car is still in serious condition. I think we were very lucky in that situation -- had the light not have been red, had there been a bus at the bus stop near the site, if it had been a little later in the day and the schools had been in operation, we could have seen much greater casualties.

Going further back, on December 1, 2004, a Gulfstream Aerospace G-4, on landing at Teterboro, ran off the runway into a stand of

trees. On December 16, 2003, a CanadAir CL-600 ended up in the mud at the end of the Teterboro runway after the pilot had aborted takeoff. On March 8, 2002, a small plane crashed and exploded into flames. On December 9, 1999, a twin-engine Beech bound for Teterboro crashed in the yard of a Hasbrouck Heights home and burst into flames, killing four occupants in the plane. On January 11, 1999, the pilot of a Cessna was killed when his plane crashed shortly after takeoff from Teterboro. On March 29, 1993, a private twin-engine plane crashed in an industrial area of Elmwood Park, in my district, two minutes after takeoff from Teterboro.

On May 24, 1988, shortly after taking off from Teterboro, a twin-engine Lear Jet slammed into a West Paterson hillside, killing all four aboard. On November 10, 1985, a small plane and a corporate jet collided in mid-air over Fairview, killing six people, including one on the ground, and 35 people on the ground were left homeless after the jet destroyed a row of homes. And finally, on January 19, 1980, a single-engine plane crashed in Bogota, bound for Teterboro.

The point I'd like to make is, we have not seen comparable accidents at other airports in the region. And I believe, as do experts in this field, that these accidents are directly correlated with the growth in traffic volume at Teterboro. Traffic movements, as you may know, at Teterboro have increased more than 26 percent in the last 10 years. Moreover, the character of the traffic has changed drastically during that time. The proportion of jets has more than doubled; it's almost 71 percent. The aircraft are usually larger, faster, and carry more fuel than their propeller-driven counterparts of the past.

With such dramatic changes, all of us who live and work around the airport are left to wonder when the next accident is going to happen, and whether the next one is going to be more catastrophic than the last one. I'd like to join with my Assembly colleagues, with Congressman Rothman, with the senior management of the Port Authority to urge for changes at the FAA. I urge the FAA to heed the call of Congressman Rothman to reduce traffic by 25 percent. The FAA must also ban those Stage 2 engines, which, while representing only 6 percent of the traffic, account for 50 percent of the noise. And in addition, I urge the FAA to impose a curfew on all nighttime flights, with the exception of medical emergencies.

I join with my colleague, Assemblywoman Weinberg, and really being incredulous that paper checks are still being moved by the Federal Reserve, given the state of digital technology today.

Stated simply, my constituents need relief. There is no reason why schools should be disrupted for the convenience of corporate executives. Hardworking people need a good night's sleep. And I think it's time that the FAA start hearing some noise from us.

Thank you very much.

I'd be happy to entertain any questions.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, Assemblyman Gordon.

And Assemblyman Johnson, District 37.

A S S E M B L Y M A N G O R D O N M. J O H N S O N: Thank you, Chairman.

I won't be redundant. We've heard the testimony regarding the safety at Teterboro Airport. I'm concerned about security, security at the

airport. I think it's insufficient, based on size and importance, given the number of types of flights handled there.

As an example, anecdotal evidence, a member of my staff-- I went to a meeting -- was called to a meeting down at Teterboro Airport. He entered the property from the east side of the airport, adjacent to Route 46. It was determined that that was the incorrect entrance. But he entered -- he was able to drive through this, unchallenged -- through this security-hardened gate, which was open and unattended, able to speak to several people within the airport property trying to ascertain where this meeting was supposed to be. As he asked around, he came across one individual who said that -- didn't even work at the airport. He was just there, kind of hanging out. So of course, this was reported to the proper authorities.

So site security is a major issue in my mind for Teterboro Airport. I think security there needs to be beefed up in this, I guess, environment of homeland security, and realizing that homeland security, nationally, is linked together from local, through county, through state. So one weak link in the homeland security fabric can create a major problem throughout the whole homeland security system when it comes to security. So I will not get into the safety issues.

I want to thank this Committee for allowing me to speak today. I want to, also, add my comments and my thanks to Chairman Coscia for what he's done. He's been open. He's come into Bergen County and he's spoken with the residents there. So I think Port Authority is on the right track.

So, Chairman, I will cut my comments there and ask if there are any questions of me.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, Assemblyman Johnson, and then thank you for your testimony. And all of your comments and questions, we will make sure we get over to the Port Authority Chairman and the members of the Port Authority.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR SARLO: Next is Jack Olcott, President of the New Jersey Aviation Association. I know Mr. Olcott has given us his testimony. We are running into a little time constraint, so we ask that -- your testimony will be part of the record, if you could summarize. And any questions from the members, I appreciate it.

J O H N W. O L C O T T: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen.

I ask that my testimony be incorporated in the formal record of this hearing. I'm the President of the New Jersey Aviation Association. Maybe some of you know my predecessor, who was the president of this organization, Commissioner Tom Carver -- now the Commissioner of Labor. But you don't know me, so I'm going to take a minute or two to explain who I am.

Throughout my career that has approached 50 years, I've focused almost exclusively on aviation. Educated at Princeton and Rutgers with master's degrees in aeronautical engineering and business administration, and holding an airline transport pilot's license with several type ratings for business jets, I recently completed the presidency of the

National Business Aviation Association, in Washington, D.C. I currently own a company called General Aero, located in Morristown Airport, and I fly a Beech Baron in the corporation, in the furtherance of that business.

We've heard comments about Teterboro Airport. I will not expand upon those. The economic activity importance of Teterboro has been described by the Chairman of the Port Authority. I wish to add that approximately 4 percent of all personal income earned by the residents of Bergen County is attributed to Teterboro Airport. Passengers and crews landing there purchase more than 400,000 room nights of local area hotel space, which accounts for a half a million dollars in local occupancy taxes.

The airport has been, traditionally, a good neighbor in terms of working with the community, attempting to provide a balance in quality of life. I might add that the New Jersey Aviation Association seeks to find the balance between the advantages that accrue to a community from aviation and the impact it has on quality of life. This whole issue that you're addressing is one of balance.

Now, the bulk of my comments will deal with safety. While considerable attention has been directed to Teterboro this year due to an unusual occurrence of nonfatal accidents and incidents, Teterboro has an excellent safety record. I challenge the statement made relative to its safety versus other airports in this nation. According to the National Transportation and Safety Board, there has been no fatal jet accident due to an aircraft immediately taking off or immediately landing at the airport. And those data goes back to the late 1960s.

Turbine powered, general aviation aircraft -- I mean aircraft that our jets and turboprops use for business transportation, the type of

aircraft that represents the majority of traffic now at Teterboro, exhibits an outstanding safety record that is on the par with the larger scheduled airlines. In 2004, professionally flown general aviation aircraft used for corporate and executive operations have recorded an overall safety record of 0.11 accidents and 0.013 fatal accidents for 100,000 flight hours.

Now, as a point of reference, Route 46, which borders the airport just to the north, experienced 3.62 automobile accidents per million miles in 2003, according to State data. Assuming an average speed of 40 miles per hour, one million miles might equate to approximately 25,000 hours of operation. General aviation safety rate continues to improve as activity levels have increased. The number of business jets and turboprops has grown from about 10,000 in 1994, to almost 16,000 at the end of 2004 -- an increase of about 56 percent. Yet the overall rate of accidents for this class of general aviation has dropped by nearly 40 percent. And the fatal accident rate has decreased by over 80 percent.

In summary, Teterboro Airport is safe. It is well-managed, and it is vital to the community and to the region of northern Jersey. The number of accidents at Teterboro this year is highly unusual and not attributable to any systematic change at the airport. Curtailing operations at Teterboro Airport would have a noticeable impact on the region's economy, and there is no rational basis for assuming that curtailing operations at Teterboro would improve safety or dramatically lower the existing, very low probability of a very bad crash at Teterboro.

I was asked to offer recommendations. I have two, and these recommendations are of equal importance: Dialogue between existing forums established by the Port Authority by airport operators at Teterboro

and by representatives of the communities surrounding Teterboro Airport should continue and, where appropriate, increase so that all parties fully understand the relevant issues affecting the economy and quality of life of the area. And secondly, aviation safety at Teterboro Airport should be addressed by aviation professionals at the Federal Aviation Administration, at the Port Authority, and by knowledgeable aircraft operators, without imposing external constraints from entities with little or no aviation expertise.

Gentlemen and ladies, we're attempting to find balance here. And it's important that that balance be based upon good science, hard facts, and, where possible, minimizing the impact of emotion in addressing this very important issue.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, Mr. Olcott.

Any questions?

SENATOR CARDINALE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

What do you think of the suggestion -- you were here?

MR. OLCOTT: Excuse me, Sir?

SENATOR CARDINALE: What do you believe would result if the suggestion of shortening the runway by 700 feet, so as to give us a full 1,000-foot barrier between the end of the runway and Route 46 -- what do you think that would do to the economic impact that the airport has?

MR. OLCOTT: The option of shortening the useable runway space is viable. You could do that. All aircraft that are operated in the jet category have requirements of takeoff and landing distances. These are Federal requirements. If you reduce the runway available, you would

change the mix of aircraft at Teterboro. You would have an impact on the very long-range, larger airplanes. You would not change the requirement for Lear Jets.

For example, if you were to reduce the weight limit to 80,000 pounds, you would not restrict a single Lear Jet from operating at that airport. You would not restrict, to my knowledge, any of the Federal Reserve aircraft flying in there. You would not change the aircraft that are flying in there from Quest. Now, this is by way of saying that these are highly technical issues and ought to be addressed by people who are very well versed in the technology of aviation.

SENATOR CARDINALE: Thank you very much.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, Senator Cardinale.

Just one final brief comment, and then we only have two people left to testify. Is it safe to say that Teterboro Airport no longer -- which started as a recreational type of facility, that recreational flights out of there are minimal? Most of the flights out of there are for business purposes. Is that safe to say?

MR. OLCOTT: Senator, that statement is partially true. Teterboro did not start as a recreational airport. It was one of the key airports in the early development of aviation in this country. And at one time, it was site of Fokker's factory, and they built the airlines, airplanes of the era. But it is safe to say that the operations at Teterboro have changed significantly from training flights, in small, general aviation airplanes, to business flights.

I also want to point out that the statement was made earlier that Teterboro has transitioned from prop airplanes to more dangerous jet

airplanes. Quite the contrary. The safest aviation segment, bar none, is turbine-powered aircraft flown by businesses for business transportation. The safety record of jet airplanes that fly out of Teterboro is an order of magnitude better than the safety record of prop airplanes. So again, my point is that one wants to seek balance, one wants to be very sensitive to the concerns of the surrounding community. These are technical issues, and they should be addressed by technical experts.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, Mr. Alcott. Thank you for your testimony today.

Next up is Dennis Marco of Public Affairs Management, who is here on behalf of the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce. And I also point out that he is a former deputy commissioner of the Department of Commerce and Economic Development, under the Florio administration.

D E N N I S F. M A R C O: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I'm Dennis Marco, Public Affairs Management. I'm here today in my capacity as a member of the Board of the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce, which I've had the pleasure of serving as both chairman and also as chairman of the Government Relations Committee. As one who has had the pleasure of serving New Jersey as the Deputy Commissioner in the Department of Commerce and Economical Development a number of years ago, I know a few things about economic impacts and long-term economic stability. It's name is Teterboro Airport.

The Chamber's overarching concern is directed to the simple fact that Teterboro Airport is an essential component to the economic fabric of the Meadowlands region. It is one of the most important reliever

airports on the entire East Coast. So the case that some make for closing it down just flies in the face of reality and common sense. Improvements on safety, improvements on noise, improvements on community relations should certainly, as they have been in the past, continue to be effective, but the idea of closure is radical beyond a fault.

Residents and local communities often fail to notice that the jobs of their neighbors and of their friends are linked to the airport. They fail to realize that non-airport jobs in the region were often directly linked to the fact that the airport is there. Here's the direct information: Teterboro Airport generates 15,554 jobs, \$670 million in wages, and \$1.8 billion in annual sales. Placed in the context of the Bergen County economy, Teterboro Airport helps to drive approximately 4 percent of all personal income received by Bergen County residents, a significant number from a single source in such a diverse economy.

But it goes well beyond that when you consider the following: Half a million dollars in annual local hotel occupancy tax revenues collected for more than the 400,000 hotel nights generated by visitors who fly in and out of Teterboro, which is one of the most significant generators of business for area hotels. In addition, many businesses locate near the airport because their businesses are dependent on the fast, convenient delivering of people and goods that the airport provides. Quest Diagnostics and its 2,500-plus employees in Teterboro is a case in point. The blood they test moves in and out of the airport, and those tests just happen to contribute to saving lives.

Property values, of course, are closely related to gross economic activity. Estimates are that aggregate property valuation in the immediate

area of the airport would drop by nearly half a billion were the airport to close. Two hundred Bergen County businesses who have registered with the Airport Services Development Office were awarded airport contracts that amount to 56 million in 2002 alone.

Besides the economics, there is the great work done by the Teterboro Aviation Hall of Fame and Museum, the Angel Flights, the airport scholarships, the role the airport plays in everything from the United Way, to Toys for Tots, to the American Red Cross.

At the Chamber, we understand the motivations of good people who are concerned about issues of public safety and noise as they relate to Teterboro Airport. We trust that the detail provided by the management of Teterboro Airport regarding the progress and the advances that have been made in addressing these challenges is reasonably satisfactory to all fair-minded people. And we respectfully submit that a run of unusual and extraordinary events that resulted in no fatalities and that was ultimately external to the management of the airport should not compromise a fair assessment of the standards that have been exacted or of the progress that is being made.

Yes, they can do even better, as they are committed to doing, but let's put aside any foolish notions. The airport is literally part of the economic lifeblood of the economy of both the Meadowlands and the State of New Jersey.

Thank you. And if anyone has any questions--

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, Mr. Marco. And thank you for continuing to be an advocate for the businesses in the Meadowlands Region. I appreciate that.

MR. MARCO: You're welcome, Senator.

SENATOR SARLO: Before we get to our final speaker, I just want to acknowledge Assemblywoman Voss, who is here. I know she's been an advocate for reduction in flight capacity and very outspoken to protect the flights that go over Hackensack Hospital.

So I thank you, Assemblywoman Voss.

And finally, is Chief Mike McGahn of the Moonachie Police Department, who -- the police force actually patrols the perimeter of the airport.

C H I E F M I C H A E L M c G A H N: Yes. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I've been told that there's some time constraints, so to briefly summarize what I've written -- and I'll submit this for the record.

Teterboro Airport is in somewhat of a unique situation, that it's nestled between the boroughs of Moonachie and Teterboro, with a small section also encompassing the Borough of Hasbrouck Heights. Teterboro is the smallest municipality in Bergen County -- the third smallest in the state -- has a population of under 50 people. They do not have emergency services in the municipality. They have entered into a police services agreement with the Borough of Moonachie and the Borough of Little Ferry. So they have a unique situation where half the town is patrolled by one outside police agency, the other half by another. Sixty percent of the airport is in the Borough of Moonachie. So therefore, the entire airport is within Moonachie Police jurisdiction, not necessarily within the Borough of Moonachie jurisdiction.

To complicate things further, the Borough of Moonachie -- their 911 service -- goes to Hackensack; the Borough of Teterboro goes to Hasbrouck Heights. The Borough of Teterboro has fire service and EMS service from Hasbrouck Heights. Moonachie has their own. So it depends where you are on the airport, if you're dialing a phone, where the 911 service will go. If you're dialing a cellular telephone, it might go to the Bergen County Police or the State Police. There's all different variables involved in providing public safety services to this airport, and it can get confusing. Somehow we've put it together, and I think that was in evidence on February 2, where you had nine officers respond initially to the call for help -- four from Little Ferry, three from Moonachie, and two from the Port Authority. There were two Port Authority officers around the clock on the airport property.

Those nine officers managed to evacuate 11 people from the airplane, place them into ambulances, and have them taken to nearby hospitals. Also, the local fire departments responded, and working with employees of the airport on the crash trucks, managed to extinguish the fire.

We have a very good relationship down there. Like I said, it's very, very complex. It can get very confusing, and it's outlined here in my testimony. But I'm here to say that we're getting it done. We also realize that there's need for some improvement. We can never be satisfied with the status quo. I've met with Chief Verdi from Little Ferry and Chief Colaneri from Hasbrouck Heights, and we are working with Director Mordaga from the Public Safety Institute in Mahwah, the Bergen County Public Safety Institute.

We're going to set up training for police, fire, and EMS personnel in the immediate area of the airport to better our response, and that is with the cooperation of Mr. Rider, at the airport. He's going to provide a space for this training. Right now, it's kind of on the back burner because we have school-related training that we have to accomplish over the Summer, while school is closed, regarding an active issued directive. But we will get to that as soon as possible, and we're going to try and coordinate that with the annual Teterboro Airport drill.

The one thing that we found is that we usually drill, again on an annual basis, for events that occur within the perimeter of the airport. And we found that once things spill out over into the local municipalities, we need to tweak things a little bit. But I'm here to say that we do have a good, cooperative working relationship with the Port Authority and the surrounding municipalities. And that's how we get things done, and we get things done efficiently.

Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, Chief. And I commend your department. You're a good case study for shared services. Shared services is working in Moonachie and Teterboro and Little Ferry. I commend you for making that work. People do have concerns when it gets to shared services. Your department and surrounding departments do an outstanding job in the time of call, working with Mr. Rider at Teterboro Airport.

The only comment I have, and a minor question is, it's working so well, right now, because the personalities are there. You speak to the people who are in charge on a daily basis. You're communicating with those people on a daily basis. And as policy makers and as -- we're always

concerned, are the systems in place to ensure, when you're not the Chief of the Moonachie Police Department and Mr. Rider is no longer the Airport Manager at Teterboro Airport-- I know there are systems in place, but should we, as policy makers, look to tighten that up in the way of codifying regulations to make sure that it's a well-documented plan? I know it's working now, because you guys talk every day, and you guys -- it's your nature. But we want to make sure, when you're no longer there, that that same response is going to be carried out.

CHIEF McGAHN: Yes. I think that would be a very good idea, to put these plans into writing and to have an agreement with the governing body, so that the municipalities, the Port Authority, and the State Legislature--

SENATOR SARLO: Okay.

Any other comments?

SENATOR CARDINALE: One comment, Mr. Chairman, if I may?

SENATOR SARLO: Yes.

SENATOR CARDINALE: We still have some representatives of the airport here. And I think -- I asked a question of Mr. Coscia, but it sort of came off the cuff to him, and he wasn't probably prepared for that. But his statement was that he would really like to have 1,000 feet. What we've heard from one of the other witnesses, if you took 700 feet off, you would only impact on the very long-range planes and the heaviest planes. Since he's looking at reducing, in any event, the weight of the planes that comes in there, I think I'd like to have a little bit more detailed response to the Committee with respect to the real impact on airport operations if you

took that 700 feet off the runways and then had the full 1,000-foot buffer that is recommended by the FAA.

SENATOR SARLO: Thank you, Senator.

Mr. Dakota, if you could go back and speak with Chairman Coscia -- and I know you're in charge of overall operations of airports in the Port Authority jurisdiction -- if you guys could take a look at that-- Guys and gals, take a look at that and get a response, through me, and we'll make sure we get it to the members of this Committee. I think it's worthy to take a look at that.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON FROM AUDIENCE: Thank you, Senator. We'll certainly do that.

SENATOR SARLO: Okay.

That's it.

Thank you, Chief, for being here.

CHIEF McGAHN: Thank you.

SENATOR SARLO: And thank you to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for being here, and bringing real recommendations to us.

Thank you.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)