Transcript of
Public Hearing

February 1, 2000
5:30 p.m.–11:45 p.m.

South Dade Senior High School
28401 SW 167 Avenue
Homestead, Florida

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL

IMPACT STATEMENT

ORIGINAL

DISPOSAL OF PORTIONS OF THE FORMER

HOMESTEAD AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA

PUBLIC MEETING

28401 S.W. 167 Avenue

Homestead, Florida

February 1, 2000

5:30 p.m. - 11:45 p.m.

The public meeting was held before COLONEL MICHAEL B. McSHANE, Chief Trial Judge.

(Thereupon, these proceedings were held in private, before the public meeting began.)

000001 BETTY HUNDEVADT: North to Opa-Locka doesn't make any sense for a new commercial airport. Think about it. Yes, MIA does need a reliever airport -- no question -- but where?

Opa-Locka Airport comprises eighteen hundred acres in an urban area with no room to grow. Homestead Airport has a total of three thousand acres.

After extensive studies performed, no negative environmental impact would occur. I repeat, no negative environmental impact.

The unemployment rate in Homestead is very high, and there is talk of having to close the hospital. What is next?

How does big money talking about using the site for a golf course justify this plan, other than acquiring more scarce land for themselves?

The public outcry from people who are using their gray matter is: Let's go south to Homestead.

Thank you.

000002 DAVID RUIZ: I am against it, because I feel that the pollution that we are going to receive

down here over the Everglades and Biscayne, the traffic that we are going to experience. If people want jobs, Miami International is always hiring.

We all live here. Everybody comes down here to get away from everything. Even the waterpark and everything we are proposing, I am against it. We don't need stuff like this down here.

That's pretty much it.

000003 NANCY LEE: My mother had a trailer in Homestead right by the Air Force Base and you really weren't aware of the Air Force Base when she was there. It wasn't planes flying all the time. She died. She would be turning over in her grave right now if this Air Force Base went in. She loved the bay. She loved the ruralness of it out here, and it just seems like this airport doesn't fit in.

I brought this to enter into the report, which was written in 1934, about the national parks.

I think the noise pollution has been underestimated. I don't think that the buffer zones have been addressed. You are depending on an honest government and that's not what we have

down here, and that's what you have to realize.

In fact, I am wearing a thing here, and it says "Americans against political corruption," because I fight here day and night, thirty hours a week, fighting against all this corruption down here, and you are leaving it to them to implement?

They did a no bid deal on the airport which in itself is the kind of deals that we get down here, and you can't trust Dade County to do the right thing. You are doing this wonderful study and then you are going to go home and say: Okay, Dade County, implement it, and it's not going to be done.

It's already a Hobby-Mas Canosa deal. You know, every time we turn around there is some corruption and I just think that we should think of the environment. We should think about -- I was at both national parks a few weeks ago, and they are so pristine and beautiful. You are not thinking of all the rental car companies and the warehouses and the crazy stuff around it.

Miami never stops. This is a development crazed place. You have Opa-Locka Airport that can be redone. There has got to be a better place. This is not the place for an airport, and I don't think you

are really taking the people into account.

You know, a lot of those people say "more jobs." It's really not going to give them more jobs. You know, the jobs whether they have to drive twenty miles for the job or not, you really can't expect the job to be right on your doorstep.

I don't know. I am very saddened by this.

000004 SARA BELLMUND: I am Sarah Bellmund. I am a citizen of Monroe County, Florida. I am here to express my personal opinion on the Air Force Base development. I believe that the Air Force Base is incompatible with the preservation of Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park.

I believe the SEIS does not properly identify the impact to the areas adjacent to the development area. It does not thoroughly investigate the adjacent and secondary impacts resulting from auxiliary development due to the airport. It does not thoroughly analyze potential impacts for evacuation due to danger or due to damage to Turkey Point, which can result from an aircraft strike. It has been incompletely analyzed by FEMA and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for Evacuation and Safety for both Turkey Point Nuclear Power Plant and

hurricane evacuation.

The development adjacent to the base has been inadequately analyzed for hurricane damage potential, flooding and auxiliary cost to the County and to the State. The contaminants arising from the base have been incompletely characterized and incompletely analyzed, and the risks and dangers from the airport itself and operating facilities have been understated and downplayed in the report. I believe that the base -- the commercial airport has safety requirements for bird strikes and birds adjacent to the runway which make it incompatible with the situation next to Biscayne National Park and the Biscayne National Park designation under the Organic Act of the United States and under the designation of Biscayne National Park and its enacting language.

I believe that the airport space redevelopment and its transfer from Miami Dade County to private developer was conducted in a manner inconsistent with public access and public information, under both Florida law and the Freedom of Information Act. I believe that the hazards posed to the other adjacent environmental areas from airplane noise and from airborne contaminants due to fuel and

incompletely burned fuel have not been properly outlined or described in the report. This includes the area known as the model lands, the national marine sanctuary, John Pennecamp Park, Coral Reef State Park.

Am I out of time? Sorry about that. Thank you.

000005 BEN GARDNER: My name is Ben Gardner. I am a citizen from Miami. I just want to say that I oppose an airport on this site and I am in favor of a different alternative, preferably a mixed use alternative that has been put forth by the Collier family.

I am very weary as a citizen about the plan for the airport as it has come out. Some of my concerns include noise pollution; as it affects the two national parks, the impact on birds. I am a pilot myself, and I still oppose this airport. I am also concerned about jet fuel in the system, in the area and what I mainly am concerned about is implementation of this plan in terms of how the County has managed Miami Airport and the corruption that has been involved.

As a citizen I don't feel comfortable handing over this incredibly important area of our community to the County to manage. I don't believe a

lot of the promises that have been made, and the plan leaves so many ambiguities for implementation later on. I think until they are clearly stated up-front, I don't think there is any way that the Air Force can feel comfortable handing this property over without really understanding the full effects of implementation. I think, in fact, they might be held liable for handing over a plan before the implementation is fully explained or detailed.

So I just wanted to make it clear that I oppose the airport being put on this site.

000006 ANA RASCO: My name is Ana Rasco. I live in Pinecrest, Florida. I have three kids that are in college. I've been booking flights to Boston for the last six years, and if I want to assure that my children come home for Thanksgiving or Christmas, I've got to book it in June because American is the only airline that flies direct from Miami to Boston. If they change their schedule -- their school schedule, and I have to rearrange the flights, I am almost guaranteed that I can't get on an American flight. They are overbooked. I end up going to Fort Lauderdale. Delta has the only direct flights available. They are cheaper than the American flights.

I can see that we really need an airport badly and this community in Homestead could really use it.

000007 ANGELA GONZALEZ: My name is Angela Gonzalez. I am a resident of Miami-Dade County. My reason for being here tonight is to say I am present and I am in support of the Homestead Air Force Base Authority for the airport. I am here to say that I am very much in favor for the development of a commercial airport at the former Homestead Air Force Base, not only because it will create thirty-eight thousand jobs for the Homestead community, but because it will generate over one billion in earnings, with the opportunity of new jobs like hotels, restaurants and car rental offices, et cetera, for the needy people in the community of Homestead and throughout the Dade County area.

Our community needs a reliever airport and my feelings for that, as a Dade County resident and being so near to MIA Airport, I feel that it is so congested that it would be a very good idea to have a commercial airport at the Homestead Air Base.

The latest environmental study released by the Air Force and Federal Aviation Administration confirms that an airport is needed and I am all

for it.

I believe that Homestead is the only viable site for the airport, that there is no other site better to build a commercial airport than the Homestead Air Force Base.

000008 THERESA SANTOVENIA: My name is Theresa Santovenia. I was born and raised in Miami. I've lived here all my life. I am here tonight to urge you to redevelop the base as a reliever airport. There is no denying the need for it and I personally have recently had to drive all the way to Fort Lauderdale to get the flights I need and it cost me one hundred dollars per person less than having to fly out of Miami International Airport.

Homestead is the most logical location for an airport. As stated in the latest SEIS report, the airport will not negatively affect the environment. Additionally, I think it will create desperately needed jobs and economic assistance for the people of the Homestead area and benefit the rest of the County as well. It's clearly the best plan and it keeps the property in the hands of Dade County and the citizens that live here.

Thank you.

000009 ROBERT WEINREB: My name is Robert Weinreb.

I am Director of the South Florida Board Sailing Association. That's a windsurfing group that has five or six hundred members that use Biscayne Bay and the Atlantic Ocean and regional waters to windsurf.

Learning about the proposed airport and the problems that it might cause our sport, I am here to ask for an alternative plan. From talking to the scientists here today, learning about the pollution that might run into the bay and the noise pollution with hundreds of flights a day possibly over the areas we windsurf, we would request that an airport not be -- a commercial airport not be considered for this site here. An alternative plan might be more toward our liking.

I picked up a letter dated February 1, 2000 from the Department of Interior, and they state they believe that the mixed use is preferable to the development of a commercial airport, and it seems interesting that one government agency is saying one thing and another one is saying something else. So we would support the U.S. Department of Interior.

Also, with those two national parks right nearby, and another national park down in Key Largo, not to mention Crandon Park on Key Biscayne, there are a number of parks that would have a negative impact

from so many flights going over them, and it's pretty clear that those flights would be taking off and landing directly over those parks.

With the major Metropolitan area as congested as it is already, having this kind of added noise and development seems not in the best interest of the region for both tourism and residents alike.

Thank you.

000010 PAUL MARINO: My name is Paul Marino. I am a resident of Miami Lakes, Florida. The reason I am here is to just give my opinion on what I've seen and what I've read. It seems evident that Miami International Airport is going to need some type of relief system, and from what I've read and what I've heard the most logical place to do that would probably be in Homestead, given that it already has an Air Force Base that was conveyed to the military and they are ready to convey it back.

The real reason I am here -- the most important reason I am here is that I've read within this proposal that there is some type of stipulation that they may be looking at Opa-Locka Airport as a possible alternative. The real reason I am here is to voice my strong objections to Opa-Locka.

One, it is in the middle of a residential community. It's our community. It's a lovely community and I hate to see it ruined.

Number 2, it just doesn't have the ability to support a full scale airport. It just doesn't have those types of facilities.

I am vehemently against any proposal that would make Opa-Locka into a commercial/cargo airport.

That's all I have to say.

000011 LAURA LAW: I am Laura Law. I just want to say that I feel very strongly against the airport in the Homestead Air Force Base area and I think it's -- I am worried about the increased air traffic, the threat to the wildlife and the proximity to the nuclear power plant. I would support any of the other alternatives other than the airport.

000012 ADOLFO HERNANDEZ: I am for the new airport here. I feel that creating, you know, so many jobs -- thirty-eight thousand is the estimate -- it can do no harm. It can obviously benefit Dade County and Homestead.

In my case alone, I have done some business with some new companies in Homestead, and in my small company we've added two people because of that, so I

can just imagine what something like this would do.

Basically, you know, that's where I stand.

(Thereupon, the following proceedings were held at the public meeting starting at 7:30 p.m.)

COLONEL McSHANE: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to go ahead and start. I want to be able to start on time.

I do have a couple of very brief administrative announcements before we start. As soon it quiets down a little bit, I'll begin those.

Let me start with an announcement which is very important to one of you folks out there. The owner of a blue Honda, your lights are on.

Let me cover one or two other matters. No foods or drinks inside the auditorium tonight, please, and we request that if you have any, pass it down to the two center aisles and the policemen will be down to pick them up from you.

One last matter, if you can possibly slide over or if you have an empty seat next to you, would you raise your hand so that folks who are standing against the wall there can come and have a seat. It might be a fire regulation that precludes you from standing against the wall. Please find a seat. There are a number here.

One other announcement, and that is that apparently there are going to be bells ringing for the night classes at 7:45 and eight o'clock and 9:15. If you folks are speaking, I will ask you to pause and let the bell finish ringing and then we'll deduct the time off your allotted three minutes.

We still have some more seats available. We are going to start.

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this Public Hearing of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on the Disposal of Portions of the Former Homestead Air Force Base. I am Colonel Mike McShane and I am the Chief Trial Judge of the Air Force, stationed at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, DC. My normal duties include presiding over Air Force courts-martial. But today, I have been made available to preside over this series of five hearings which are being held in this area concerning the disposal and subsequent reuse of the former Homestead Air Force Base property.

I have not been involved in the development of any of the proposals that are being considered here tonight, so you understand that. I am just

running a fair and impartial hearing.

I want to thank you for taking the time from your busy schedules to come here tonight for this public hearing. If you were interested, I hope you took time to visit with the technical staff prior to this portion of the hearing to have your questions answered.

In preparing this Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, or Draft SEIS, as you'll hear us calling it, it was the Air Force's goal to understand the environmental implications of deciding for what purpose and to whom to convey surplus property at former Homestead Air Force Base. The Draft SEIS examines reasonable ways in which the properly might be developed, used and the reasonably foreseeable environmental consequences of the alternatives.

At this time I would like to introduce Major Mike Chipley of the Air Force Executive Issues Team. He's an engineer by trade, with a Ph.D. in civil engineering from the University of Colorado. Major Chipley will discuss the proposed action and alternatives, and provide a short synopsis of the reuse issues.

Since the overall purpose of the hearings is

to obtain input from you on the contents of the Draft SEIS, the presentation will be short.

Major Chipley.

MAJOR CHIPLEY: Thank you, Colonel.

I too would like to extend my thanks to all of you for taking time to provide your comments on the Draft SEIS.

For the past several years we have been engaged in the process of completing the realignment and reuse of the former Homestead Air Force Base as required by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act.

The Air Force's primary goal in this process is to transfer the properties in manner that supports the local plans for economic revitalization of South Florida and protects Biscayne Bay and nearby Everglades National Parks. A disposal must also be compatible with continuing the existing military and law enforcement missions.

The Air Force and Federal Aviation Administration, or FAA, are the designated Lead Agencies for the Draft SEIS.

The Air Force has decision-making responsibilities for the transfer of the property.

The FAA has decision-making responsibilities for airport facilities.

There are three cooperating agencies. One cooperating agency is the National Park Service, because it manages Biscayne National Park, and Everglades National Park.

Another cooperating agency is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service because it has the responsibilities to ensure threatened and endangered species are adequately considered and because of the proximity of Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

The third cooperating agency is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency because of its regulatory responsibilities.

The contractor hired by the Air Force to actually conduct the analysis is Science Applications International Corporation, or SAIC for short. They have been supported by another contractor, Landrum and Brown, which performed airport planning and noise analysis.

I would like to take a couple of minutes to update you on the SEIS process and what has occurred since the scoping period ended in July of 1998. More than four hundred forty individuals, organizations and

agencies provided written input during our one hundred thirty-two day scoping period, and one hundred ninety-five people spoke at our public scoping meetings. The size and complexity of the Draft SEIS has grown substantially because of the number and diverse nature of issues and many federal agencies, state and local governments, private organizations and concerned citizens involved. Midway through the analysis, two mixed use proposals were received which were incorporated into the analysis.

We recognize this has been a long process for everyone. We want you to know many other communities have also struggled through the base closure process. Some former bases have been developed for aviation uses, others for non-aviation uses. The success of redevelopment depends upon the local community's involvement and support.

The Draft SEIS examines a number of reuse alternatives for remaining surplus property at the former base. Ongoing reuse involving property that has already been transferred, like the Job Corps Center, the Dade County Homeless Trust, the regional park, and the other deeded properties, would continue under any of the alternatives.

The alternatives underwent thorough and complex analysis of the environmental and economic impacts that could potentially occur as a result of redevelopment. Fourteen topics were used as the basis for the analysis. Public and agency concerns that were expressed at our scoping meetings identified important issues and helped focus our analysis. Those concerns have been incorporated throughout the Draft SEIS.

When the reuse planning process was initiated for Homestead Air Force Base, Miami-Dade County was designated as the Local Reuse Authority to develop a reuse plan for the former base.

The County has proposed that the one thousand six hundred and thirty-two acres of remaining surplus property at former Homestead Air Force Base be transferred to Miami-Dade County Aviation Department for development of a commercial airport.

This is the Proposed Action addressed in the Draft SEIS. The analysis of the Proposed Action included identifying and assessing new flight tracks that would be used at the commercial airport.

Airport operations, in general, are characteristically different than commercial or residential land uses in the types and numbers of vehicles, equipment and people, and the resulting impacts to the environment. The main issues of the proposed action involves air pollution, stormwater runoff and noise levels.

Another alternative examined in the Draft SEIS is a Commercial Spaceport. The main issues with the commercial spaceport alternative involve the uncertainties related to the licensing process, safety and potential increase in noise.

Three approaches were examined for non-aviation uses, presented as the Mixed Use alternative.

Market driven development, the Collier Resources Company proposal and the Hoover Environmental Group plan.

The Mixed Use alternatives could create a higher intensity of use in a shorter period of time, but may have less environmental effects on the national parks.

The Draft SEIS also includes the No Action alternative, which means the property continues to belong to the government and reverts to caretaker

status. Under each alternative, the Air Force, Florida Air National Guard and Customs Service continue to use the runway for their current military and law enforcement missions.

The Draft SEIS addresses each alternative in the context of future growth in South Florida and also takes into account potential cumulative impacts of other projects. It also includes some historical information where available.

Your views and comments on the Draft SEIS will be important as we work toward completing the Final SEIS. We are now about half way through the sixty day public comment period. We scheduled these hearings to provide you an opportunity to review the Draft SEIS and formulate comments you can give here today, and also to provide you some time after these hearings so you can incorporate things you might learn tonight into your written comments. Whether you choose to come today or provide your comments in writing between now and March 7, we look forward to receiving your inputs in assisting us in completing the final document.

The Final SEIS, scheduled for completion in July 2000, will include comments made at the public hearings or submitted in writing during

the public comment period for the Draft SEIS, along with Air Force and FAA responses to your comments.

A decision on what action will be taken concerning the transfer of the disposal properly will be made no earlier than thirty days after the publication of the Final SEIS.

We will continue to distribute news releases and send news letter to those on our mailing list throughout the final course of the SEIS process. Anyone wishing to be added to the mailing list should complete an attendance card located at the registration table and check the appropriate box on the card.

In summary, I'd like to say that we do understand that this is a complicated and often frustrating process. Let me reiterate that neither the Air Force nor FAA proposes to directly develop the surplus property.

The Air Force's goal is to transfer the land in a manner that supports local plans for economic revitalization and protects Biscayne Bay and the nearby national parks.

A disposal must also be compatible with continuing the existing military and law

enforcement missions.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you, Major Chipley. This concludes the Air Force's presentation. In a few minutes we'll begin the public comment portion of this hearing. You will have several ways to provide your comments.

If you brought written comments, please place them in the box on the comment table. You can leave them on the table up-front here as well.

If you want to write down your comments while you are here, there are forms at the comment table out in the lobby.

You can also take a form home to complete and then mail it back to the address provided on the comment form.

You can also write your comments on your own form and mail them in. You do not need to use the comment forms. They are only for your convenience.

You will have the opportunity to provide oral comments when I begin the public comment portion of the hearing.

Let me tell you a few things about the public comment period. We will hear from elected

officials. First we are mindful of their time constraints and schedule. We'll call them first. Then each of the proponents of the alternatives were offered an opportunity to describe their proposal and speak about it.

Miami-Dade County expressed an interest in speaking. We'll hear from representatives of Miami-Dade County. They will be given up to ten minutes to speak about their proposals.

You may also notice that some of the other proponents, although they've elected not to give a presentation, have materials available at the tables and poster boards around the room.

After the County's presentation we'll hear from those of you who have submitted cards indicating that you wish to speak. We will call you in the order the cards were submitted.

Anyone who has not yet filled out a card, and who wants to speak, will be given an opportunity to do so after all the registered speakers have made their comments.

Let me add that if you desire to speak tonight, each individual or organization will have three minutes to provide comments.

Please clearly state your name and the name

of the organization if any you are representing before you begin your comments, so that the court reporter can get that down. The transcript will be a permanent record of this hearing and will be published in the final SEIS. Please, do not provide any personal information in your comments if you do not want to see it published in the final SEIS.

It's very important that you use the microphones on either sides of the room here so that the court reporter can hear you. The focus is to listen to your comments regarding the contents of the Draft SEIS. Proceeding this presentation you will have an opportunity to ask questions one-on-one of the technical staff and hopefully your question will be answered. Any further questions in the course of making your statements will be addressed in the final SEIS rather than answering them tonight.

Again, please focus your comments on the Draft SEIS and the analysis of the options.

If you need to have your comments translated into English and did not indicate that when you signed in, please let us know when I call on you.

If you do make comments tonight and later decide you have additional comments or know

someone who is interested in the comment process but cannot attend any of the meetings, written comments can be submitted until March 7, 2000. Mailing address may be found in all of the available handouts.

At this point I am going to call on the elected public officials who have indicated they desire to speak tonight, starting with Mayor Alexander Penelas.

000013 MAYOR ALEXANDER PENELAS: Members of the hearing panel, ladies and gentlemen, good evening. I am Alex Penelas, Mayor of Miami-Dade County. I want to welcome each of and every one of you to South Miami-Dade. Respecting each speaker's time limitations, I would ask that you put yourself for just a moment in the shoes of the citizens of Miami-Dade County, who since the 1960s, have tried unsuccessfully to site a reliever facility for Miami International Airport.

Consequently, ladies and gentlemen, the issues that are at stake here are very, very serious and the results are irreversible, if this community is prevented from appropriately developing an airport at the former Homestead Air Force Base.

In your hands rests a critical decision that

we all agree will have implications for decades to come, and will decide the impact of quality of life and the economic stability of Miami-Dade County, as a whole, and it's local communities. You'll hear from many of those local representatives in a few moments.

Throughout the course of these hearings, I would ask you also to remember that both the President and the Congress made a commitment to this community -- a strong commitment -- which was clearly articulated on July 8, 1993, when then Defense Secretary Perry announced that Homestead Air Force Base would become a national showcase of ways to breath new life into military facilities.

Sadly, sadly, Miami-Dade County has been everything but a showcase on this issue. I would further ask you to remember that the land which now holds the former Homestead Air Force Base was owned by Miami-Dade County until 1942, when it was taken by the federal government to meet national security needs.

Aside from attaining a period of normalcy in the mid '40s, after yet another major hurricane, the base served critical national defense needs, including playing a critical role during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Ladies and gentlemen, the federal process to determine the final disposition of the base has been unprecedented -- unprecedented in both length and cost. For the past seven years the Homestead area community and the communities around Homestead have been playing by the rules, and letting the process take its course. Our disappointment has been overwhelming as we find that the rules and the parameters for decision-making are ever changing, and study after study have brought us to the same conclusion.

A Final Environmental Impact Statement in 1994, a sensitivity analysis in 1998 and a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement released just seven weeks ago have all concluded that a public airport was an appropriate and environmentally safe use for the former Homestead Air Force Base.

In fact, it is important to note that in 1994, in its response, the FEIS, even the Department of Interior, suggested exploring Homestead as an alternative.

Ladies and gentlemen, I simply cannot over-emphasize the importance of this base property in meeting this community's future

needs. Miami International Airport is the only commercial service airport in all of Miami-Dade County. Even with the current addition of a fourth runway, MIA will fall short of the demand for commercial service capacity sometime between the years 2006 and 2015. This point was clearly confirmed in the recent supplemental study.

As we all know, aviation facilities do not materialize overnight. They take years in their development.

In respect to your time limitations, I will hope that you consider Miami-Dade County's request. We have made commitments to comply with every available mitigation project. This airport will provide far more good jobs than any of the alternative uses, thirty-eight thousand jobs at full build out, and over a billion dollars in earnings as substantiated by the study.

The supplemental study itself indicates that the Opa-Locka Airport simply is not an appropriate alternative. So I would hope that you would take all this into consideration.

Thank you very much for having me.

COLONEL McSHANE: Folks, if we are going to hear your comments, we don't need demonstrations

or clapping for any of the dignitaries who are here either for or against, please. That's wasting your time.

We'll move on to the next speaker, Mayor Steve Shiver, from Homestead.

000014 MAYOR STEVE SHIVER: I have written comments that I will submit. I've been a little under the weather, and I apologize.

First of all, I want to thank everybody for coming together in an adult-like manner to discuss an issue. It is very important that we make an attempt and we are able to discuss the issue in an adult-like manner, not necessarily continuing to make ourselves look like children, quite honestly.

I am glad we are all here as adults and working hard --

COLONEL McSHANE: Sir, no more comments or we'll ask that you be escorted out.

MAYOR STEVE SHIVER: I would ask that you add some more time for that comment.

I am too a native of Homestead, born right here in Homestead thirty-three years ago. I am very proud of what I've been able to do here as a child growing up enjoying our environment and

working hard to make sure that our surroundings are protected.

Some of our farmers in our community have been working the land for many years. I want to set the stage by saying that everybody in this community works very hard to make sure that our natural resources come to provide enjoyment for our children and their children.

But more importantly, in 1993 we began studding what to do with this airport. In 1994 our record decision was given, and in 1996 a decision to start an airport and the plan was developed by Miami-Dade County, submitted back to the Air Force.

At that time, the environmental organizations came forward and said the original impact statement was not appropriate, we should study it again. So we did.

We went into a sensitivity analysis as Study Number 3. After we finished the sensitivity analysis, we went into Study Number 4, which is the current SEIS, and that's why we are here today, to talk about that.

Once again we find ourselves being faced with those who say that the study that was mandated and initiated primarily by environmental organizations

was not appropriate.

Ladies and gentlemen, the people of our community, the people that we represent, the people that eat, work and live here are tired of studies. It is time for us to move forward and look at an asset that we really need to create jobs in the community.

I am going to end by saying that the facts are clear. Miami-Dade County in the last thirty years has looked for an alternative site for an airport. With the addition of the fourth runway at Miami International Airport, we are going to have a capacity problem. This is a long term planning problem.

Every study completed regarding this property over the past seven years has indicated that Homestead Air Force Base is the most logical and reasonable place to site a reliever airport, and quite frankly, most importantly, my community needs meaningful jobs.

Those that have been studying the alternatives say that they will still be subjected to more years of environmental studies and uncertain risks.

As an elected official, we are charged with

making an informed decision. I would ask everybody in the room, and you as well, to rely upon the four studies and over five million dollars of tax payers' monies of our community that have been paid to analyze this issue. Rely upon that. All of them say we need an airport. Homestead is the place to do at this time a limited use airport.

The City of Homestead has passed a unanimous resolution in support of this, and remember, the thing is to make sure that we keep the activity of economics here in Homestead. Keep the activity here in Dade County and not Broward.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Next is Otis Wallace from Florida City.

000015 MAYOR OTIS WALLACE: I'd like to first of all thank the hearing committee for giving us this opportunity to be heard. I'd like to thank the Department of the Air Force for making this Supplemental Environmental Impact Study.

During this type of study, I got a little study on my own regarding the environmental condition in South Dade. Without trying at all, I quickly discovered an endangered species. It has two eyes, two arms, two legs, a brain and a

heartbeat. It has dignity and an overwhelming desire to support its family.

But unlike most endangered species in our midst, there is no Sierra Club to protect a working man who simply wants to support his family. There is no club or society for someone who just wants nothing more than to feed, house and educate his kids.

Since there are no clubs to speak for them, it falls upon me and my compatriots to speak for the people of Florida City that have not been spoken for in the past.

Jobs are the most important thing to the people of South Dade. We need them to support our families. I just have to believe that God made men and women to be a part of nature, and the simple fact is that of the plans submitted to you, there are two that have merits, but I must favor the airport, because of the overwhelming number of jobs it will produce.

To those who are fat and happy and rich, and have homes of their own, perhaps jobs are not important, but for the people that struggle to support their family, it's the number one issue.

So I say to you, there is an endangered species in South Dade. It's the unemployed men

and women of our community. Somebody must stand up for them. Somebody must begin to talk about them.

Let's protect the sparrow, let's protect the key deer, but let's also protect the people. What God has set upon this earth, let no man disregard. Think about this when you make your environmental analysis.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Mayor Raul Martinez from Hialeah.

Folks, please, quiet down.

000016 MAYOR RAUL MARTINEZ: I love you too.

Members of the community of Homestead, first of all I want to thank Mayor Steve Shiver for inviting me. This is not about a particular city. This is not about Hialeah or Homestead or Hispanics or Blacks or anybody else. I think this has to do with the promise that was made to the people of Homestead back in 1992 when they were suffering from the Hurricane. This has to do with the fact that the base was going to be closed, and it is a fact that we need to find employment for our people.

I live about five or six blocks away from

Opa-Locka Airport. I see the planes flying into the City of Miami and Miami International Airport, and we have to find a compromise. We have to find a compromise where we can create and protect the employment of our Dade County residents and meet the needs of the environment.

I am sure that those of you that know more than I do, because I have to believe the mayor of a small city, you can find a way and you can find a solution to continue to protect the environment, but to create the jobs that this community so badly needs.

We need jobs, and this space with the new airport can bring vitality back to not only South Dade, but also to South Florida, because no matter whether you like it or not, flights are going to continue to come to Dade County and they are going to go to Opa-Locka and they are going to go to Miami-Dade. We are still going to have the planes flying. Why not benefit from a strip that's already there, from the infrastructure that's already there? We can find a compromise.

There was a resolution that was passed by my city counsel, one that basically says we support the creation of jobs. Let's protect the

environment, but let's also protect the people that will protect the environment.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Next I will call Mayor Jose Diaz from Sweetwater.

000017 MAYOR JOSE DIAZ: Welcome Committee, and all the people here. This is not an easy thing to do, to get up in front of you, when there are two different topics as strong as these to decide among a community, to determine the needs for ones and the needs for others.

As to Mayor Shiver, it takes a lot of guts to initiate this. He stated a point that that brings a benefit to all of us here. That benefit is reflected upon one main issue, and that is getting jobs to the community. Thirty-eight thousand jobs pay one billion dollars in earnings. There are a lot of communities across the nation that wish something like this could be put in their laps.

I saw a lot of youth as I walked into this building. I commend the teachers, because this is a democratic society, and we teach freedom of speech, and I am proud of that, but it's hard when they graduate and they go out to the market -- those that have to work and go to college at the same time -- and

try to find a job.

My community and other cities, we are having trouble trying to get youth into the proper jobs. Let me tell you something, it's hard to bring this down and say: Hey, this airport didn't come in here, but at the same time the environment is still safe. If it doesn't come, what are you going to say to those students when they graduate and there are no jobs in the community? They have to go elsewhere.

The other issue is the environment, that we all respect and love. I want my children to take advantage of the Everglades and their children too. That's what I stand for.

The studies and millions of dollars have been spent by the government to determine that both can co-exist. We have to take that into consideration, because that's a very important point. I know there are two sides to every point, but we have to find a blend and find a way to work together and find a solution for this.

I think if we look at it real hard, this would benefit all our community to have this commercial airport in Homestead.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Next I call on Mayor

Ignacio Diaz of North Bay Village.

I don't see him responding. I'll go on.

Mayor Rasco, Key Biscayne.

000018 MAYOR JOSE IGNACIO RASCO: Distinguished members of the panel, members of the public, I am the Mayor of Key Biscayne. The comments I make here tonight should not be construed to represented the sentiments of the ten thousand people of my community, but I am here to support my fellow mayors, especially Otis Wallace, Steve Shiver and Alex Penelas, and their efforts over many years to bring back their respected cities in this area. They've worked tirelessly in this capacity.

I am here to say that I support their efforts for a better tomorrow for all the residents of South Dade, to support economic development in Miami-Dade County that is crucial and respects the environment.

The South Dade area has a large unemployment problem, a deep health care crisis, a need for high paying jobs that will meet the needs of tomorrow. This is the reason why this area was named an environmental empowerment zone by the federal government. There is a need, and we can solve it. We can do that without harming our present environment.

At present there are no guidelines to protect these valuable natural resources. Under the present system there are no ways to protect our bay. Under the proposed system, the County, under the jurisdiction of the State of Florida, we will have force and mechanisms and potential mitigation plans in place. They are not now present.

The time to act is now. We need to help our neighbors in the south. We need to help them for a better tomorrow. I support Mayor Shiver and I support Mayor Wallace and the residents of Dade County in this effort.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Miami-Dade County Commissioner Natacha Millan.

000019 COMMISSIONER NATACHA MILLAN: Good evening. Is this working?

Good evening and welcome to our county. My name is Natacha Millan and I represent District 13, which includes Hialeah and Miami Lakes.

I am a proud resident of my city, but I have great concerns for anybody that lives in South Dade County, and I have responsibilities as a commissioner on issues that cover the whole County. That's why I am here.

This is my fourth time in this area. I will come as many times as necessary. Every time there has been an issue of people who forget what good manners and appropriate respect is, and every time I've walked away with good feelings that those who know how to respect, whether they agree with me or not, there is a certain thing as good manners.

I tell you, sir, that this area needs a reliever airport. I will tell you that our airport is full almost to capacity and will be in the year 2006. I will also tell you that the need for this community, with a fifteen percent unemployment, with a hospital that is just about to close, and with businesses that deserve a better life. There is a great need.

The first thing we must say, and I think Mayor Wallace was very clear, is that endangered species -- I never thought of it that way -- was human beings also.

I come from an island. I come from Cuba. I am very proud to be from Cuba, and we are surrounded by water and we were surrounded by animals and we are surrounded by beautiful places, but we need to take care of the human beings first. Quality of water is very important, but human beings come before everything.

I will tell you in all honesty that I would not be here if I did not see in the SEIS that there was some test and balance that you requested or you suggested that would make the base viable but at the same time protected.

There is no good need to destroy the beautiful things that God gave us. I don't want children destroyed. I don't want to see a high volume of women walking the streets because for whatever reason they don't have a job. I also do not listen to the voices of those that don't know what they are saying. I listen to the voice of my conscious. That's why I am here.

Federal Express thank God did not leave the County, but Federal Express has provided seven hundred jobs.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Let me remind everyone that if you want to speak, your opportunity is to fill out a card and come up here when it's your turn. Please respect the other speakers as you would hopefully respect yourselves. Thank you.

Now I call on Miami-Dade County Commissioner Bruno Marrero. There is a letter that he would like to be read. Does somebody else have his letter? He's

not here. If not we'll move on and he can mail his comments like everybody else.

Next I call on Wayne Slaton.

000020 WAYNE SLATON: Good evening. Welcome Air Force. My name is Wayne Slaton. I am the chair for the past three years of Community Council 6. For those of you who do not know, Council 6 is the Greater Miami Lakes area.

I also want to admit tonight, and proudly admit, that I am a card carrying member of the Tropical Audobon Society. I am also a member of the Sierra Club and the National Federation of Wildlife. I receive from these letters information, from all these organization, and I respect and endorse many of the fine work that some of these organizations do.

I always hope there is room for all points of views in all these discussions. With that I will say in the last few weeks I have also reviewed studies that have been made by the Air Force, and I have to say that I am seeing that for me there is no real overriding threat to the surrounding environment and the community, by the proposal of the federal government, wishing for a commuter airport.

I am concern that you understand the unharmful need for the base redevelopment into a

commercial airport. South Dade needs a real and viable economic development. Dade County needs a real and viable airport expansion. It is very important, and must be taken into consideration for the future demands on all of South Florida, specifically on the possibility of using Opa-Locka for a needed airport expansion.

The City recognizes that there are sixteen thousand residential communities living directly across the street from Opa-Locka. Opa-Locka, we already knows is not a viable answer. There are three problems with Opa-Locka that are in your study. The Opa-Locka runways do not have the capacity that the Homestead Air Force Base can provide. There are serious air space constraints, because Opa-Locka is so close to Fort Lauderdale and MIA, right in the middle, it would cause a significant number of airplanes crossing, and finally again the fact that the residential development is directly in front of Opa-Locka Airport.

I for one cannot equate the safety and the quality of life of sixteen thousand residents, seven churches and five schools, to the unsubstantiated concerns over sawgrass and wildlife.

I am concerned for the environment, but to

me human life is more precious.

I urge you on behalf of the community that I represent to bring the study to finalization and hopefully you will conclude that the Air Force Base should be turned over to Dade County.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Next will be Miami-Dade County Commissioner Katy Sorenson.

000021 COMMISSIONER KATY SORENSON: Good evening members of the Air Force and FAA, elected officials, citizens of Miami-Dade County.

We have an opportunity tonight, and in the process, to close an unfortunate chapter of South Miami-Dade County's history and begin to create a bright new future of economic development, prosperity and the best protection for our environment and our national parks.

In addition to speaking here tonight, we can ask President Clinton to approve the Collier Family's proposed swap land in the former Homestead Air Force Base.

Let me finish please. I encourage everyone to be polite.

In 1995 Miami-Dade County granted a no-bid long term lease to HABDI, a group of developers. I,

as one of the commissioners of South Miami-Dade, opposed this vigorously. However, it is a new day.

The Collier and Hoover families have collaborated to develop a first class golf course, business park, hotel, aquarium, marine institute, luxury RV community, a mixed use --

COLONEL McSHANE: Sir, please, take it outside.

COMMISSIONER KATY SORENSON: A mixed use alternative. The plan will create more than sixty-eight hundred jobs initially and more than twenty thousand eventually, more than replacing the jobs lost after Hurricane Andrew.

The Collier/Hoover plan offers many advances. The first is compatibility with South Miami-Dade's goals of 1994, redeveloping the base, sustaining agriculture and expanding tourism.

In contrast, an airport threatens agriculture, by paving the way for industrialization that will devour available farm land and threaten Biscayne National Park. Imagine what it would do to the quality of our neighborhoods and residential property values.

Second, the Collier/Hoover plan takes the politics out of Miami-Dade County. Under the Collier

plan the County will have no claim to the land. It further makes the land taxable property for the County.

Moreover, the real choice is not between the Collier/Hoover plan and the airport, the choice is between green plants or a red light. That's because the environmental community is prepared to wage a long legal battle to stop an airport. That means that the former air base can grow weeds and cobwebs, not jobs, for at least a decade, and who is going to invest in the legal fees to fight this war, the tax payers of Miami-Dade County?

Even if the airport attains approval, after years of litigation, we will have to pay for buffer environmental mitigation. Yes, the tax payers of Miami-Dade County will have to pay for that.

Finally, there is no evidence that any airline will ever be willing to invest in an airport twenty-five miles away from the main airport.

Given the proximity to MIA, Opa-Locka is better situated to serve as a reliever airport, and that was pointed out by a County study in 1995. We are getting an additional runway in MIA and an addition runway in Fort Lauderdale. How many runways do we need?

It has been a long wait for the citizens of South Miami-Dade to enjoy the economic prosperity they have never felt.

Now, the Collier/Hoover plan for the redevelopment of the base makes economic sense, environmental sense and can happen faster than any other option. We can only hope that the White House, the Air Force, FAA and powers that be will see the logic and give the land quickly to the Collier family, so the people of South Miami-Dade can get on with their future, one that's right for everyone.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Commissioner Dennis Moss.

000022 COMMISSIONER DENNIS MOSS: Good evening and welcome. First of all, I want to say that Homestead Air Force Base is physically located in District 9. It is three and a half miles from Goulds, next to the Landings, across the street from Harper Square and down the road from Naranja and four miles from the City of Homestead, Unincorporated Miami-Dade County.

In the past, as an elected official in the district that the base is located in, I have taken to oppose any development on the base until issues raised by friends in the environmental community were addressed by the SEIS.

As a result, I have intentionally chosen not to publicly authenticate on a manner that we might realize later on would not be resolved if at all until after the SEIS was completed. This brings us to this point tonight.

The SEIS has been released, and public comment has began. What I have heard in District 9 is that we need jobs, good jobs. What I have heard from our staff is that we need an airport and there is no other place to develop one. What I have heard from the environmental community is that an airport would destroy our national parks, but we are not ready to endorse upon the Collier alternative.

What we have heard from the SEIS is that while it impacts the environmental, those impacts can be mitigated and would allow commercial growth to commence. What I have heard from the people from District 9 is that we need jobs, good jobs.

While the alternatives are offering jobs, they are predicated on our location, and therefore we have not chosen their opportunity for development of the theme park and all the activities in South Dade, and the same cannot be said about a reliever airport anywhere else in Miami-Dade County.

I feel that the environmental impacts can be

to a degree possibly mitigated so as to not destroy our national parks. It would be hard to ignore the jobs that can be produced, the high paying jobs that would be available, the fact that a reliever airport, which is viable to the entire community, not just South Miami-Dade County, cannot be developed in any other location other than the base.

Finally, I want to applaud everyone who came out tonight. You have allowed us to know where you are on this issue. Before I come to a final position, I will want, inclusive of public testimony, and at the end of the process, I can tell you that I plan to weigh heavily on the issue of a base, in the interest of a facility that is located physically in my district.

In the interest of the constituents of my district and in the interest of all Miami-Dade County people that I represent, as I stand before you tonight and I feel like Yogi Bera when he said, "This reminds me of deja vu all over again."

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: I'd like to call on Senator Roberto Casas. Is Senator Roberto Casas here? I don't see him.

Senator Daryl Jones.

000023 SENATOR DARYL JONES: Good evening members of the panel, ladies and gentlemen. I am Senator Daryl Jones from District 40. I represent the area that is encompassed by Homestead Air Force Base, as well as going to the east to where Biscayne National Park begins and west to where we have Everglades National Park.

I want to thank you for providing us the opportunity tonight to engage in this very important part of the democratic process. I'd like to make four points.

First, it was kind of interesting to arrive tonight and see the protests on the outside. It's nice to see some action, not necessarily calmed, but at least controlled. There were some people who are obviously for and some who are against this very difficult issue.

As your elected official, as I looked at that group, I saw on the left people who wanted jobs, who need them, who wanted higher paying jobs. On the right I saw people who care a great deal about the environment.

So this is why this is a very difficult issue. On balance, I find it very tough to take the opportunity for food out of the mouth of another

person and their family. The Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement says that a commercial airport can be built in a manner that would mitigate any harm to the environment. I have not seen any other study that contradicts this statement.

While I value the opinions and input of every citizen, I believe it is important for our objective decision makers to have some basis in fact for their decision. This is why I support Dade County's proposal.

My third point is that, if I am not mistaken, I don't believe anywhere in the United States is there a dual field, having heavy and fire operations in a single place. If you look at the outline estimate of how much traffic there will be on this facility if you build the commercial airport, One, you either have to build two runways which I think would be a violation of the trust imposed by the SEIS or, Two, you are going to have to move the military fighter presence from Homestead Air Force Base. I don't know that either one of those is a viable option.

Fourth, the Air Force has a thirty-four base closure, following the local community's recommendation each and every time. All thirty-four

times they have followed the recommendations of the citizens. Should the Air Force not follow Dade County's recommendation in this particular case, I think it would be difficult, because future brass senators and congressmen will ask you: Why did you close the base and not allow the community to build what they wanted to build there, and will that happen in my home as well? So it could be difficult for you guys.

So I respectfully request that while the Collier and Hoover plan show promise, there are a great number of questions that remain with that particular plan.

I respectfully request that you at this time support Dade County's plan.

COLONEL McSHANE: Stanley T.G. James. Indications were that there was a letter to be read in lieu of testimony. Do we have that letter?

Moving on to Speaker of the House of Representatives, John Tasher.

Moving on to State Representative Gaston Cantens.

SPEAKER: It's a public hearing. Hear from the people.

000024

REPRESENTATIVE GASTON CANTENS: Thank you.

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments here today about the reuse of Homestead Air Reserve Base, and particularly about the SEIS. You've heard from many elected officials tonight on their views toward a redevelopment of Homestead Air Reserve Base. I would like to take this opportunity for a moment, to remove my hat as an elected official, and speak as a private citizen.

There is a book called The Death of Common Sense, and that's what has occurred in this case. Citizens of this great nation are frustrated. They are tired with government at all levels. They are tired and frustrated with the rules and regulations, that sometimes we wonder whether government is in place to help us or merely to make our lives miserable.

Eight years of studies since Hurricane Andrew and the realignment of the base have resulted in nothing more than economic devastation to the South Miami-Dade area, and still we cannot see the obvious. Every elected official that has spoken here tonight has spoken about the need for a reliever airport in Dade County, and that need will occur within the next five or ten years.

We have three choices. We can use Opa-Locka

Airport as has been suggested. That airport has the same restrictions that we currently have in Miami International Airport, even greater restrictions. It's in the middle of a residential neighborhood, no room to grow.

We have Homestead Air Reserve Base, choice Number 2. It's always been an airport. It's always going to be an airport. It has one of the longest runways in the nation.

We do have a third choice, however. That third choice is that come five or ten years from now, when the need is a present need a for sale sign will go up around Homestead Air Reserve Base, and us, the citizens of Miami-Dade County, will have to buy back the land to build that reliever airport that the federal government should have given to Miami-Dade County today.

I heard earlier that this is a local issue. You are right. It's a local issue. It's a Miami-Dade County issue, because five years from now we all will be paying the bill to acquire the two thousand acres that it will take to build that reliever airport, if we don't get the reserve base transferred to Miami-Dade County.

Let us use common sense and allow the

federal government to transfer the Homestead Air Reserve Base to Miami-Dade County so we can move forward together as one community.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: I call on Representative Rudy Garcia.

000025 REPRESENTATIVE RUDY GARCIA: Thank you. Good evening distinguished panel members, ladies and gentlemen, elected officials.

I come before you tonight as a fisherman, as a sportsman, as a boater, as someone that loves this environment. I was born and raised here, and I have received many awards by environmentalists throughout my public service in the Florida House of Representatives.

I represent District 110, in the area of Hialeah, Miami Lakes.

Back in 1992, right after Hurricane Andrew, where many of the people that are sitting behind me today lost a lot of their lives, homes and property, I came down to South Dade to help rebuild with thousands of people from the north side of town. After that we went up to Tallahassee and brought to Dade County, south of Kendall Drive, over six hundred fifty million dollars to try to bring this community back to where

it needed to be before Hurricane Andrew.

With that said, I understand many of the problems that have occurred in South Dade, including no baseball team, the loss of the Base, Hurricane Andrew and many other things that have happened here, including what is going on with the farmers today in South Dade, where we are continuing to lose jobs day after day.

The reason I am here this evening, distinguished panel, is to ask you to consider the jobs, to ask you to consider the economic development that Mayor Wallace and Mayor Shiver are so hard working for, as well as ask you to consider the environmental constraints that this community needs, but the bottom line here, ladies and gentlemen, is that this community truly needs economic development, and we need the jobs that will come with the airport.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Next we'll call on representative Marco Rubio. Representative Rubio. I don't see him.

Representative Larcenia Bullard.

000026 REPRESENTATIVE LARCENIA BULLARD: Good evening. Good evening to you distinguished panel and to the people from District 118 and 119. I am

speaking to you, because you are the ones who will be affected by all this taking place in this area.

As I've listened to the speakers, I couldn't help but think that here we are again in a staging room. I am a state representative, and because I am a state representative, I cannot take a position on something that you didn't vote for.

As I listened to Commissioner Sorenson speak, I had to turn to the right of me, then I turned to the back of me and I turned to the left of me, and I saw all of this great embrace and applause, and I question where are we going tonight with this whole issue?

I understand there are two more meetings. Environmental versus economics, that's what I am hearing. There are two more meetings, am I correct -- four more meetings. Environmental versus economic. There should not be any question.

Scientifically we know that we are polluting too many areas and we are taking away the clean air from people.

I am from a little town in South Carolina. My children, I brought them to South Dade in 1980 because of clean air, because I wanted them to get the same experience I did.

So I stand here today as an environmentalist, but also as someone who wants to see jobs, but I see and always see another way out. I can't take a position until I hear all that's being said, but I do say this, that I was one of the first -- and the guys from HABDI are here -- you know. You sat in my office. I talked to you. So I don't need to tell you what we talked about, because you know what happened.

The gentleman who was running this case at that time was a gentleman from out of town. He wanted to take Homestead Base and redevelop it. Of course, as most of you know, we've been to this area before and we've debated this whole issue and nothing has happened. I believe it needs to be developed, but I believe it needs to be developed for families, for social environment.

That's what I am here to tell you. I struggled with what happened, but I want to let you know that the people voted for local control. I came here tonight to hear citizen input and I've not yet heard it.

I will close on this note. I have always called back to the community. I've asked my commissioners, the groups who were involved, please

tell me what you think about this particular issue, and I see the majority of the citizens from this district, because I know most of you, saying that you don't want it.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Representative Gus Marrero. Representative Gus Marrero.

Ola Massaline.

000027 OLA MASSALINE: Good evening. My name is Ola Massaline from the Naranja Community. It is wonderful that everybody is discussing what happens in our community. We have not been invited to participate, and everything you do there is going to directly concern us.

We are hurting there. A lot of us have remembrances of the United States Air Force. They left us. We have not recovered since Andrew. We are not for or against any group, but what we are saying is that we will not be divided as a community. We are White, Black, Hispanic, Haitian, and we are together. Dade County is going nowhere before we are through.

We need jobs.

I cried when I came in the building, because people are arguing. They are not acting like Americans, that my husband fought for. We cannot do

anything fighting, but when Americans make up their minds to come together and work together, like the Americans that I know, we can find peaceful solutions.

Just in case anybody is interested, Naranja is saying: Let's form a coalition. Let's come together and reason together. We need your help. You've built barns for your neighbors. We are your neighbors. You've built houses for your neighbors. We are your neighbors. We are suffering in Naranja because we have nothing.

Six hundred million dollars given to Dade County, not one penny was spent for recovery in Naranja. Our children stay out on the street, because they have nowhere to go, nothing to do in Naranja. People say they don't want to come to that area, but we have good children in Naranja. We have honest people in Naranja.

I am heartbroken to see Americans come to the table and acting like fifteen year old children. God forgive us, because we've forgotten who we are.

Let's come to the table. Let's sit down, and as the Bible that's sitting on the table in our bedroom, come, let's reason together.

We are hurting in Naranja and we need your help.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: I am going to call on the representatives from Miami-Dade County who will be given no more than a ten minute presentation.

Folks, if you want to get going on this -- Gary DeLapa, Merrett Stierheim and Ramon Rasco.

MERRETT STIERHEIM: Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Merrett Stierheim. I am the County Manager for Miami-Dade County. I want to make a statement.

Can you hear me now? Start the clock again, please.

My name is Merrett Stierheim. I am the County Manager of Miami-Dade County. I want to say very clearly that I am not here to support any degradation or adverse environmental impact to either Everglades National Park or Biscayne National Park.

I have fished in the backwoods of the park and in the bay for over forty years. I love that area deeply.

This is my second term as county manager, total of eleven years now, almost twelve, and nine years as President of Greater Miami Convention Bureau. I think I have an appreciation for the importance of the aviation industry to the economy of Dade County.

We are one of three international gateway airports in the United States. The majority of our visitors are from abroad, international. We have over ten million overnight visitors who come visit here, and that includes tourists as well as business people, and that tourism industry generates sixteen billion dollars with direct and indirect impact on about twenty-five percent of our work force in Dade County.

We are an international gateway city. I think this is a pragmatic issue. I look upon it, and we use a metaphor, like preserve a wealthy environment. You may not need water today, but you know you are going to need it tomorrow.

The SEIS study made it very clear that after we expand our five billion dollar expansion program at Miami International Airport, after we expand Miami International Airport to its maximum capacity, after we expand Opa-Locka to maximum capacity, after we expand Fort Lauderdale International to maximum capacity, the SEIS made it very clear that by 2015 we are not going to have sufficient capacity to continue to grow and prosper internationally.

Ninety-five percent of our visitors come by air. If you don't think we are dependent on air travel for the economy of this community, as a gateway

community, you have another thing coming.

I guess, to close, we think it's very important that we reserve that capacity at Homestead Air Force Base. There is no other choice. We built a jetport in the middle of the Everglades and abandoned it. We studied building an airport in Northeast Dade and abandoned it. There are no other alternatives that I am aware of, and I think your study demonstrated that.

Our position, respectfully, is that we wish to support the position taken by the County.

Thank you.

GARY DeLAPA: Good evening. My name is Gary DeLapa. I am the Aviation Director for Miami-Dade County, Florida. We operate Miami International Airport, Opa-Locka and hopefully Homestead Air Force Base. I've been in the community over thirty-five years. I graduated from the University of Miami, and I have worked for county government for nearly thirty years.

I would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to present our department's recommendation for redevelopment of the former Air Force Base. It is important for this panel to bear in mind that the airnautical capacity issues I am addressing tonight

are not only a South Dade issue. They are not just a Miami-Dade County issue. These are issues of great concern for all of Florida.

You've already heard from our mayor and other elected officials on what the decision means to the continued prosperity of this area. Our County Manager has reminded you of the process that has gotten us to this point.

History is on the side of aviation. The South Florida community has a longstanding and preeminent position in the aviation world, dating back to the first airline terminal in the United States in 1928, and continuing through the tremendous growth of both tourism and foreign trade.

This community has come to rely on the aviation industry as the heartbeat of our local economy and the chief provider of jobs. All is not well. All is not well, however. The current system of the airport is actually strained to its limit and will be unable to meet future market demands unless we have a new facility.

Along the walls of this auditorium we have displayed documents and graphics on future aviation demands, and on our capacity to meet the demand. It's imperative that you understand our inability to meet

market growth demands means loss of economic activity and a serious impact on our employment base and business community.

You may be aware of our efforts in the construction of a fourth runway at Miami International. This project is the single most important element of the aviation department's long and short range goals of meeting the capacity needs. However, this final incremental gain in MIA's capacity will not be able to meet the aircrafts forecast beyond the year 2015.

As the airport's sponsor, our primary goal and strategy is to provide a facility that meets both near, as well as long term demands. Of course, the critical element is to preserve the flexibility to be able to react to future market conditions that may be unforseen today, such as a free Cuba, change in airlines operating practices or airlines parts, the growth of E-commence and the success of the free trade agreement, which will stimulate the foreign economy.

Miami-Dade's most limited capacity constraint today is the number of full service commercial carrier runways available in our airport system. Under the current direction, MIA is quickly reaching exasperation, and it is at the point where

there is no additional runway capacity that can be provided.

Numerous efforts in the last three decades to identify new sites in South Florida for a commercial aviation facility have proven unsuccessful. There are no other properties.

Consequently, the most crucial issue confronting us today is the decision on the ultimate reuse plan for Homestead Air Force Base. That decision will affect whether or not this community will be able to accommodate and provide economic benefit from the tremendous worldwide growth of the aviation forecast.

This is growth that we will be unable to be meet with MIA. From an aviation point of view, the conclusion is inescapable. We need Homestead.

However, this need will not come at the expense of environmental compatibility. The plan is to provide an aviation facility to meet the demands, while ensuring a balance between environmental issues, equality of life issues and economic opportunity for our residents.

Our own analysis, supported by this independent SEIS, and numerous other studies, indicate that there are no adverse environmental impacts

associated with a commercial airport.

The air noise attributable to military operation, they are far outweighed by national defense consideration. The noise impact from commercial aircraft operations are found to be less intrusive than those resulting from the military presence.

Mayor Penelas addressed the fact that he was unable to present information on our position on environmental concerns, but is going to be reflected in my comments.

Miami-Dade County is committed to ensuring that the planning phase development of the commercial airport alternative is implemented in an environmentally compatible way. These are not just words or hollow promises.

The Miami-Dade Aviation Department has a long track record of environmental responses. MIA, we have spent over one hundred seventy million dollars since 1994 to address environmental issues. We are recognized internationally as the leader among airports in dealing with environmental matters. Our current construction program is built upon maintaining the environmental quality of not only the airport, but of surrounding communities as well.

These are real testaments of our commitment.

Under the leadership of Mr. Penelas and Merrett Stierheim, no one should fear implementation of the airport alternative.

COLONEL McSHANE: Sir, the ten minutes is for the group of you. You are taking more than that.

RAMON RASCO: Just two minutes, please.

COLONEL McSHANE: I am sorry, but I announced the ground rules at the beginning. We did say ten minutes. Sorry.

First card from members of the public is Maurice Ferrer. Is he still here?

Proceed.

Superintendent Dick Ring.

000028 SUPERINTENDENT DICK RING: Good evening. I appreciate the opportunity to be here to speak to you this evening.

My name is Dick Ring. I am Superintendent of Everglades National Park. I'd like to say that the National Parks Service and national parks are very much an integral part of the community. They are not separate and apart from it. We are part of the national community, a community that's made up of all people in the United States.

We support conversion of Homestead Air Force Base for the economic benefit of South Dade. We very

much support that. However, we want a sustainable solution here, not one that we have to undo and redo in our lifetime and hopefully in our children's and grandchildren's.

We have expressed areas of concern in the SEIS process. They've included water volume, noise and secondary impact from growth associated with any selected alternative here. We've been heavily involved in the supplemental SEIS process as a cooperating agency and hope to continue to be.

The commercial airport proposal that's in the Draft SEIS will bring jobs, but we don't believe that it is compatible with the national parks and we do not believe it's a sustainable solution for this community. You need only go and spend some time here in Miami International Airport, and listen and look around you, to understand what the future holds.

By 2015 there will be two hundred flights a day over this community and the national parks. That's one every five minutes. That's degradation of a national park that is significant.

A mixed use alternative will provide jobs for this community and it is an alternative that's sustainable, and I believe in the best interest of the entire community. I believe we should leave an

outstanding legacy for our children and grandchildren, one that does keep up with the outstanding national resources and quality of life here in South Dade, one that does not leave them with the choice between undoing significant impact from noise and development or face leaving a place that is lousy to live in.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Superintendent Dick Frost.

000029 SUPERINTENDENT DICK FROST: Good evening. It won't surprise you if I said I'd second most of what Dick Ring said.

The SEIS is certainly an impressive document. It contains a lot of very useful, valuable information.

As a national park superintendent, and as a resident of this area, I find that a lot of that information leads me to two very strong conclusions. One, that a commercial airport is not the best use for the air base -- for the former air base, not the best use for the environment and the impact on the environment or impact on the community.

Second is the fact that there are viable economic alternatives that the air base can be used for that don't have the same negative impact.

Dick Ring mentioned one of the statistics

that jumped out of the SEIS. I want to mention a couple more.

At maximum capacity there will be six hundred flights a day out of that airport. Those six hundred flights will fly over our neighborhoods, our wetlands and national parks. That means most of those six hundred flights by the way will be compressed into the ten hour period, from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., which averages about one every one to one and a half minutes. I took those figures from the SEIS.

The altitude for those flights crossing into Biscayne National Park will be sixteen hundred feet or less. The altitude for the flights crossing into Everglades National Park are from three thousand to forty-three hundred feet. The cruising altitudes for these planes is anywhere from twenty-five to thirty-five thousand feet.

There are other statistics.

Over Key Largo, there will be one hundred twenty-four flights a day in that same ten hour period. That's one every seven minutes. Those flights will produce a forty percent increase in the noise level in Key Largo.

I have with me a letter that was sent to the Air Force from the Department of Interior. I want to

read quickly some excerpts so everyone will understand the position of the Department of Interior.

It say, "The Department believes that the mixed use alternative" -- the mixed use in this case means the kind of alternative represented by the Collier/Hoover proposals -- "is the preferred approach to achieve the stated goals for disposal of this property, and urges the Air Force to adopt the mixed use alternative in its recommended decision. The Department believes that the mixed use is preferable to development of a commercial airport, because it avoids adverse impact on national parks and avoids adverse impact on wildlife. It offers additional environmental benefits, avoids potential disruption on Everglades restoration activity and offers substantial economic benefit to South Florida."

COLONEL McSHANE: Time.

SUPERINTENDENT DICK FROST: It also says that, "The Air Force's goal -- quote -- "is to dispose of the property in a manner that supports local community and revitalizes South Florida. The Department of Interior believes this goal should be" (inaudible.)

COLONEL McSHANE: Next is David Ritz.

000030 DAVID RITZ: Good evening. My name is David

Ritz. I am the president of the homeowners association at Ocean Reef, which is located in Key Largo, just southeast of the air base.

With me tonight are a number of residents from Key Largo, who drove up from the Florida Keys. We appreciate the opportunity to come up here and speak tonight.

Obviously, it is in our best interest to have our group provide written comments rather than speak tonight. With your permission, my statement also will be representative of the group you saw.

First, let me state that we are opposed to the airport as proposed in the SEIS. We are in favor of one of the alternative uses, and we feel that the SEIS is flawed. Unfortunately, and mistakenly so, the Draft SEIS stands for numerous impacts to Key Largo and other communities surrounding.

The Draft statement says these surrounding areas are impacted by military aircraft operations, but there will be increased noise after developing a commercial airport. Because the situation is perceived bad now, that is no justification to make it worse.

The increase in aircraft flights from the approximate fifty-four daily operations, to the

estimated six hundred daily operations at maximum buildout, demonstrates the magnitude and the change and its impact.

Obviously, the noise from the airport's development is most troubling to the Upper Keys, however there are other adverse impacts that cause us concern.

According to the SEIS, the proposed airport will increase local air pollution.

Biscayne Bay is already oversaturated with pollutants and steps should be taken to lower those levels. Instead, the airport will cause nitrates from the airport up to a four-fold increase.

Simply put, an airport is not welcomed in our neighborhood, outdoor residential areas.

Historically, the economy of South Dade has been consisting of military and agriculture. The military has been removed. Any action that will negatively affect agriculture and tourism should be avoided.

An alternative that supports the two economies should be heard, and that is the Collier/Hoover Group Plan discussed in the SEIS. This alternative will provide much needed economic development for South Dade County, without the adverse

environmental impact associated.

We support creating jobs that help the continuing recovery after Hurricane Andrew. The benefits should outweigh the environmental cost. Such would not be the case with the proposed airport. We encourage the Air Force to transfer the base and do the Hoover plan.

SPEAKER: Time.

COLONEL McSHANE: Pete Shields.

000031 PETE SHIELDS: Thank you, Colonel. My name is Pete Shields. I am just a citizen. I live in Florida, but I see things a little different.

Carl Haas, a columnist from the Miami Herald, reportedly is saying it's undisputable that Homestead and Florida City haven't fully recovered from Hurricane Andrew, but there are ways to develop the air base without jeopardizing the community's character, not to mention the two largest attractions, Biscayne Bay and the Everglades.

With that as a backdrop, let's assume that everybody in here has the same goals, jobs, a prospering economy, an environmentally friendly atmosphere within an acceptable time frame and at an acceptable cost.

As a homeowner and a citizen who loves the

Keys, let's just do a cursory examination of what is on the table. The environment is affected by an airport. We don't know how much, but I hear noise and water pollution concerns to a certain level, depending on the study you use.

The Hoover plan, as I understand, of course, would be the environmentally friendliest.

How about funding available? I don't really know about it. There appears to be problems with the financial ins and outs.

Collier/Hoover has an impeccable track record. They can, and they have made it happen.

Jobs is the number one issue that was mentioned here tonight. Since Hoover has joined Collier, and their efforts are compatible, I submit that the immediate and total jobs and payroll dollars as well, as a practical matter, will exceed that of an airport.

Why do I say "in a practical manner?" It is my understanding that there are formidable groups present here tonight that will challenge the use of Homestead Air Base as a commercial airport. They have publicly stated they can tie up the decision for many years.

What is to litigate with the Collier group?

Lastly, and purely as a citizen, I have something to say. For my share, as a citizen, Mr. Chairman, Colonel, I am having trouble with why this is difficult -- why this decision is so difficult.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Sheppard Kingsman. I don't see him.

Norm Kramer.

000032 NORM KRAMER: Hi, Folks. My name is Norm, and I am the owner of Tropical Fun Center located in downtown, picturesque Naranja. I am also a local citizen. I've been down here, working, trying to make a living off this area here with all the folks, with the anticipation of development of the air base that we were so badly let down years and years ago.

We are struggling. I know many other small business people here that are struggling also.

Of the airport, the base has an airport. We've got our life savings tied up here, and our life right here in downtown Naranja, and we are looking forward to some viable development.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Ignacio Sanchez.

000033 IGNACIO SANCHEZ: Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to speak on the alternatives that are

available. As I listen to the speaker from the Ocean Reef Club, I was appalled, because as has been explained by Mayor Penelas, this is an issue that concerns the future of Dade County.

When he called for a show of hands, and half of this room is composed of rich people from Ocean Reef who can care less about jobs and Naranja --

COLONEL McSHANE: We need to have the speaker speak and the court reporter take it down or is not on the record at all. So please hold your -- hold it. Don't do it. Let the speaker speak.

IGNACIO SANCHEZ -- who can care less about the economic opportunities of the people of Naranja and who can care less of the small business owners as Norm just explained, and who today don't care about the future economic development of Dade County.

This is an asset that belongs to the people of Dade County and belongs to the same people, who like Norm, the people from Naranja, whose taxes paid for their property and who gave up that property for national defense in 1942, and now at the time that the federal government is going to give it back, we should give it back to the people of Dade County to develop as an airport.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Roy G. Phillips.

000034 ROY G. PHILLIPS: Thank you very much.

My name is Roy Phillips. I live at 12725 Southwest 218 Street in Goulds, Florida, a poor community. I am also an entrepreneur, one with a business along Washington Avenue, an avenue that needs business.

My wife and I came and we placed money in this community after the hurricane to build it up. I pay two kinds of taxes. I pay an assessment tax to the City of three thousand six hundred fifty-eight dollars and twenty cents and I also pay a tax to Dade County.

We need jobs, and we need a plan. I had an opportunity to work with the aviation and environmental communities, two communities studding the location of the airport, and all have come to the conclusion that Homestead Air Force Base is the best place to be.

I don't think you understand rich people. Let me tell you something. We build stadiums for rich people with taxes. Now we are going to build all this land as an airport for people. What are we going to do with the poor people of this town?

There are people who stayed in this area,

didn't move out. Our business was destroyed, but we stayed here, and we didn't run to Key Largo. We didn't go to North Dade. We stayed in this town. We the people make up this community.

When I stand on the outside and see these poor people that come here because of agriculture, because they work for a dime, they need jobs.

We need to deal with the people here in Homestead and Florida City, where this Homestead airport strip is located.

I love the environment. I am a biologist by trade, but there are guarantees in this study to make sure that we have an airport compatible with the environment.

Thank you so much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Commissioner Miriam Alonzo.

000035 COMMISSIONER MIRIAM ALONZO: I am here in support of the airport. I believe that we have gone through an extensive process. I believe that we have done everything possible, and I am here to support the people of Homestead. I am here to support the thousands of jobs that this community needs. There is no doubt in my mind, and all of these studies have proven, that we have a tremendous need for an expansion of the airport.

We need Homestead to have an airport. We need to have these jobs. I think the process has to be completed. It has been eight long years of studies and now it's time to deliver to this community. I think the long promises, the long wait -- as a matter of fact, I believe that the citizens of Homestead have waited too long and now it's time to deliver on the promises and to complete the process, and that's what I am here tonight to say, what the voices of the thousands of residents of South Dade are asking.

They want the jobs. They want an environmentally sensitive airport, and we need the development in Homestead.

I am here to bring that message and to say that this is the best location for this airport.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: John Merrigan.

000036 JOHN MERRIGAN: My name is John Merrigan. For a long time I've been critical of the Air Force for how long it took to get the study to this stage tonight, but I want to commend the Air Force, because despite the acrimony, this is the stage we got together to.

The study the Air Force produced is so thorough, so good, that it answers the most important

questions. Most people in this room have to deal with, who are you going to believe?

Opa-Locka is an alternative you read in the newspaper. The study says it isn't, and it proves it isn't.

In this room you get a lot of opinions about shocking statistics about what the study says. The study is your interest. You are the ones. You should be able to make a decision about what is truth and what is fact.

One last point, really to go over the skepticism, and anybody that tells you, the facts are available. Whether you believe those facts or not, when you hear, "We are going to tie this process up," that is the last -- worse thing possible.

COLONEL McSHANE: The next speaker will be Robert Cruz.

Let me go ahead and call a couple of other names so we don't use the time finding these folks. Steve Bateman will follow and Marielena Villamil.

000037 DR. ROBERT CRUZ: My name is Dr. Robert Cruz. I am Professor of Economics at Barry University and citizen of Dade County. I am here to support the county's proposal, because I think it a sound proposal and meets the test of protecting the environment and

at the same time creating jobs.

Your own supplemental impact study, prepared by the Air Force, clearly demonstrates that the county's proposal would have a much greater impact on jobs and income than either of the alternative proposals presented.

The Collier/Hoover proposal, are dependent on an assumption that in my opinion carries a greater, much greater forecast risk than the County's proposal, and the economic impact cannot be revealed.

The growth and demand for air transportation services in Miami-Dade is well documented and difficult to dispute. Moreover, the Hoover and Collier proposal plans to convert a public asset into a private asset, and that should be part of your consideration.

The analysis provided by the professionally prepared supplemental indicated three times the earnings in the community than the Collier plan, twice as many earnings as the Hoover plan. Moreover, the County's plan will clearly generate higher quality jobs throughout the community.

The announcement of economic impact prepared by the SEIS are based on a well-founded methodology. One of the things that is not included in that study

is that the fuller County proposal would likely generate -- creates serious opportunities for new businesses to emerge.

Economists like myself, who have studied the South Florida area, would agree that after World War II the economic growth in South Florida has been the creation of the local transportation mega, including the airport and the seaport. In fact, Dade County could not have emerged as a center to international trade if it had not been for the infrastructure investments that were made at the airport and the seaport.

I think that we have to keep in mind that this area of course is in need -- in great need of economic development. That is clear. The statistics clearly show that Miami lacks behind the nation in the creation of jobs, lacks behind the state in creation of jobs, has a higher unemployment rate than the rest of the nation and the rest of the state.

This area obviously needs this investment to keep the growth momentum growing. Improvements at MIA can only go so far. It's time to create the expanded capacity that's necessary by preparing a new commercial airport.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Is Steve Bateman here? I don't see him. Ms. Villamil?

000038 MARIELENA VILLAMIL: Yes.

Thank you for letting me speak to the distinguished panel. I am here to speak on economic development. Economic development leads to improving standard of living for the average citizen in the community.

A commercial airport is the superior anchor to enhance the economic development potential of the Air Base at Homestead and Miami-Dade County, relative to the other types of investments proposed for the Homestead Air Force Base.

Let me explain what my -- how I reached my conclusion. First, the average pay in the aviation industry is thirty-four thousand dollars per year, thirty-two percent higher than the average wage of twenty-five thousand nine hundred dollars per year involved in recreation services.

Therefore, the higher income generated by aviation employment, relative to the other types of project incentives, would stimulate economic development in Homestead to a greater degree than recreational projects.

Second, aviation employment and activities

also depend on human capital in a community, leading to a higher labor force. For example, more than one-third of the employment in the aviation industry is composed of skilled workers, defined as those with degrees beyond high school, such as engineers, mechanics, supervisory personnel.

Leisure employment, on the other hand, does not require the same highly developed skills that are found in multi-faceted activities of a modern commercial airport.

Third, a fact that strongly favors a commercial airport in Homestead is the demand for efficient air cargo services. Miami International Airport is already saturated with the handling of two million tons of cargo each year. The dual economic integration between South Florida and Latin America, the need for warehouse infrastructure to service, the expanding E-commerce business, all indicate the revitalization of the future of Homestead Airport.

The other projects however do not enjoy the demand or need as that of an airport in southern Miami-Dade County, which is the gateway of the Americas.

In essence, the viability of an airport is certainly superior to the viability of the other

projects presented. These other projects are not strongly tied to the demands for international commerce and the off-line infrastructure demands of the economy of the 21st century.

A modern airport complex is essential for the establishment of high wages, high value businesses that require fast and efficient transportation.

The other projects do not stimulate economic responsiveness that a modern airport can create.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Next three names are Lawrence Levinson, Patricia Robbins and Augustine Esquenia.

Lawrence Levinson.

000039 LAWRENCE LEVINSON: My name is Larry Levinson. I've been very privileged to work for the communities of Homestead and Florida City, and I want to direct my comments tonight very brief to the very issue that you raised, Colonel, with respect to the environmental impact statement. I want to address those issues.

First, let me point out that it is certainly important and critical to know that this document, by the way, was over a thousand pages long. It is the size of the Los Angeles telephone directory. It's

about the size of the New York telephone directory. A lot of work has gone into it. We believe that it has in all these pages responded clearly and with persuasive force to all the environmental points that have been raised during the extended period, that is, issues ranging from A through Z, from air quality, to noise, to safety and zoning.

So the treatment of these issues should put to rest once and for all any concerns that environmental compatibility of the proposed disposed transaction, that is a commercial airport at Homestead, which as we all know was recommended in the Air Force study, and the broad community participation by Miami-Dade County, which is recognized and supported by the Department of Defense.

At this time, under law, policy and precedent, the community's plan, in this case the commercial airport, must be given inclusive presumptive weight by the Air Force. Washington does not make the decision alone. The community does. That's monumental of the branch of law.

The Air Force has full jurisdiction in determining how the base will be disposed of. Let me conclude by speaking about three additional points.

First, we believe that the Air Force should

reject the Collier plan. The proposal is unreasonable. It's not an alternative acceptable under the National Environmental Policy Act, and our comments are going to tell you why. You must disregard the Collier plan, because it came too late, too late in the process. Johnny come lately. It is not feasible, because it is tied in with conditions and speculative in deed.

Your very own paragraph, let me quote, states on Page 2, Line 4, the following: The Collier proposal is dependent on the ability to exchange federal base for property in the former Homestead Air Force Base, and it is not for certain whether the same can occur.

By the same technique, the draft also tells us that the Hoover plan we heard about tonight is also highly speculative, because no specific developer has been identified and it is unknown and we requires --

COLONEL McSHANE: Time, sir.

LAWRENCE LEVINSON: One last -- thank you. I have one more sentence to read. I just want one more second. Thirty seconds.

COLONEL McSHANE: Time.

LAWRENCE LEVINSON: Thank you, sir.

000040 PATRICIA ROBBINS: I am Patricia Robbins. I

represent an organization in Homestead, Florida that has been in operation since 1991. My position with that organization is co-founder and president of this organization. We feed those who are hungry throughout the State of Florida. We feed ten thousand families in Goulds, Princeton and Homestead and Florida City.

I think this is very important for all of you here to know that. Jobs are needed in Homestead, Florida City, Goulds and Naranja. I ask you to support development of a commercial base in the Homestead area.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Augustine Ojalgbe.

000041 AUGUSTINE O. AJALGBE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to give my time to Ramon Rasco, if you permit that.

I ask to yield my time to the --

COLONEL McSHANE: I don't think we are going allow that under the rules. I am sorry.

AUGUSTINE O. AJALGBE: My name is Augustine Ojalgbe. I am a citizen. I live in the South Dade community. I support the conversion of the Homestead Air Force Base to Miami-Dade County for the development of the commercial airport. The commercial airport will bring to the community very good high

paying jobs, compared to Collier/Hoover.

As a member of South Dade County, South Dade community, I feel good jobs -- a good commercial airport will bring forth opportunities for minorities. I support the commercial airport plan.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Next three names are Salomon Esquenia, Vanessa Mase and Mike Richardson.

000042 SALOMON B. ESQUENIA: My name is Salomon Esquenia. After spending over five million dollars of tax payers' dollars on the SEIS, which we all know employs certain techniques, we are at basically the same arrival, the same conclusion as in the 1994 environmental study, and this is that a commercial airport at Homestead is environmentally compatible. Now that we have gotten over our mental concern, it's my belief and my opinion that the proposed action under the SEIS is the preferred plan for an extremely important reason.

First, we heard Alex Penelas. We have heard Dade County Aviation Department say that Dade County needs another airport. In fact, the SEIS has provided that Miami International Airport is expected to reach full capacity between the years 2006 and 2010, and provides there is no other available site for the

reliever airport, including Opa-Locka. You know, South Florida needs a reliever airport at Homestead.

Second, we cannot allow for these airport to be -- a public asset to be transferred to a private developer. Homestead Airport needs to go back to the members of the Miami-Dade County community.

Third, we have listened to Mayor Shiver of Homestead and Wallace of Florida City, and they have expressed the extreme need for their respective communities to have jobs. It is provided that an airport will generate over thirty-eight thousand improved paying jobs, better jobs than any of the other proposals plans in the SEIS.

My fourth and final reason is that airport related jobs are estimated to generate over eight hundred million dollars in revenue, and by the year 2015 reach over one billion dollars of revenue. This will allow the people employment. This will allow a strong, solid economy.

The airport at Homestead would generate more revenue than any of the others in the proposal, and this is one of the reasons that I encourage you to go beyond your environmental source to do what is right for South Florida and to transfer the base back to Miami-Dade County.

COLONEL McSHANE: Is Vanessa Manes here? I don't see her.

Mike Richardson.

000043 MIKE RICHARDSON: Good evening, Colonel. Welcome to Homestead. My name is Mike Richardson. I live at 590 Southeast 19 Drive in the city of Homestead.

I came to Homestead in 1989 to be in the Air Force, retired 1992, and soon after that became a member of the We Will Rebuild Team that successfully lobbied to bring the Air Force reserves back to Homestead.

I worked with the Department of Defense as a base transition coordinator to Homestead, a position I left in 1996.

In the ensuing four years I've been extremely frustrated by the divisiveness this issue has caused in our community and the lack of progress, of final economic use for a very important piece of property to the economy of South Dade.

I have written comments for you, and I will pass them on to you. Many of my comments have already been addressed by other people here tonight. They are familiar in two general areas. They are broad conceptual things where I think you missed some issues

that need to be addressed. I only had the opportunity to looks at the summary documents, and many of the issues may be addressed in the larger document.

I have six editorial things at the end, of some issues where I don't understand the points that you are trying to make, and I think you need to write them a little clearer.

There are two issues, however, that I think the Air Force needs to address, and the Air Force in and of itself is uniquely capable of doing.

One is, Judge, you need to get in the -- when I went through the base transmission coordinator training, they told us about the defense property disposal legislation. Basically once property is declared surplus and excess, that one of the federal agencies has an opportunity to claim that property. When that window of opportunity closes, they no longer have the opportunity to come back at a later date and say, "Now we want it."

In my mind that precludes the Department of Interior for asking for the property at this time so that they can execute the Collier trade.

I am not a legal expert. You need to look that one up.

The second issue that hasn't been well

addressed, although it was alluded to earlier, was the issue of what happens if we pick up one of the mixed use alternatives that does not contribute operating dollars direct to us. What is the impact going to be, the next round of base closures -- the 482nd will be a prime candidate for closures -- the next time we have base closures. I will say that I am extremely skeptical about the value of these public hearings, given the facts that two cabinet level officials have come out publicly in opposition to the commercial airport. It seems like the administration has made up their mind on this issue and you are wasting your time and our time.

It says to me that as Vice President Gore has already written the revised record of decision for secretary Peters to use.

Thank you for your patience.

COLONEL McSHANE: Next three names are Thomas Weller, George Cadman and Oma Gomiz.

000044 THOMAS WELLER: I am Thomas Weller. I am an attorney in town. A lot of people have left. Apparently some of you are getting tired.

As an attorney, I've practice in a small firm in Homestead since 1979. I enjoy parks. We were in college in the early '70s and you can't be a

non-environmentalist. I am here to tell you this County needs -- since '92 a lot of people left. I am glad you didn't. I didn't either. We need jobs.

The planned Air Force Base or the commercial base is going to give us jobs the quickest, and in the long run the best jobs. Until you can show me a plan that does this swift as well, I am going to stick with the commercial airport. Without these jobs we are going to continue withering. We need them now.

There are a lot of people out there who are against this and I am wondering how many of you have read the SEIS, because this is not propaganda. You need to get the facts. I am being presumtious enough to say that the expert who did this knows what they are talking about. In my job as an attorney I hire experts. If they are unbiased, I believe them.

The study is unbiased as far as I can see. The facts are here. They say there is no adverse -- significant adverse environmental impact. If it's good, let's do it. The study is here. Now what?

Earlier a lot of you were upset that we had people from elsewhere in Dade County and possibly outside of Dade County speaking. We found this is a lot of problem. The same people give to Sierra Club. I would be willing to give you their comments -- there

are extremely rude people here. I hope that you people are not from South Dade, because I know most of the people I know from South Dade are hospitable.

I hope your comments change, that you don't hold any personal animosity and using threatening tyranny on the (inaudible.)

A survey was done. Sixty-three percent back this, as do I.

Thank you.

000045 GEORGE CADMAN: Good evening, Colonel. I am George Cadman, United States Marine Reserve, retired, also a native of South Dade.

I graduated from this high school -- as I told to my wife I can hardly believe it -- twenty-one years ago. I never thought I would be back here to do something like this twenty-one years later.

I will share with you and the panel and the folks that make the decision, I was please with the information that you provided here in the analysis. I felt very positive when I saw that you concurred that out of the three uses for the air base, an airport was a viable alternative, and I believe that we have to look as a community to the future and not be shortsighted because the County planners have said we will need additional air space and airports in the

future, and fifteen years from now it is not that far away, because when I look back twenty-one years, that wasn't very long ago.

For those of you who look in the future, remember that fifteen years from now we shutdown an economic development in Dade County because of your lack for sight. This will be truly a tragedy for those who come back after us.

I love this community. I love the environment, and I think we need to protect it, but I think we will build the necessary devices that will protect the environment within this community, so that we can work with balance and be able to work together as a community and provide the jobs.

It tears my heart out to hear about the folks in Naranja and the problems they are having and the problems in Goulds. I know what it was like to go through all the problems that we suffered through and we still have not recovered. They are the people that can't afford to go to our national parks. We have our national parks and we have residents in our community that can't even go to the national parks.

I mean, it is just unbelievable. I ask you, this panel, and to the people in Washington, that we come up with the opportunity to provide the jobs

necessary to restore this community to the position that it belongs in. It's just unconscionable to me -- I served this country in Vietnam. I've become very cynical when I see a process and when I hear, "We'll take you to court and we'll bring you to your knees." That makes me sick.

000046 KEN MARTONES: Good evening distinguished members. Good evening members of the Board. We have heard from probably most of the people that represent this community, our mayors and commissioners, our state representatives that have been here before us, except for one that has not read your report, which is the safest report we have. We all have the best interest of this community.

This community of Naranja Lakes is a community that has suffered through a lot after the base was closed. Over seventy percent of the people of the city have voted for the development of this airport -- commercial airport.

The Air Force already left intact the air field, as well as law enforcement agencies that are needed to proceed in their absence.

Now, Florida City has an incredible amount of unemployment, fifteen percent or higher. I implore you to make a decision and make a decision for this

community to pull forth and in favor of the development of Homestead Air Force Base into a commercial airport.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: We've been going for about two and a half hours. We have a court reporter. At least a five minute break. We are going to take five.

(Short recess taken.)

COLONEL McSHANE: Please have a seat. I'd like to get going again. I do want to remind you that we are going to be having four more hearings over the next two days. There are two tomorrow in Kendall and there will be two on Thursday in Miami. I believe we start tomorrow at noon with the first of two hearings in Kendall and the second one at 7:00 p.m. Then on Thursday we'll be in Miami starting at noon and again at 7:00 p.m. for the evening session.

At this point I'd like to call on the next half a dozen names. If I call your name, just gravitate toward one of the microphones.

Mercedes Sellek, Alex Anzardo, Ralph Moore, Virginia Pike, Frank Nero.

Mercedes Sellek.

000047 MERCEDES SELLEK: Thank you. Good evening.

My name is Mercedes Sellek. I am here to speak on the developer, Homestead Air Base Developers, Inc.

We heard a lot of hype and about the environmental impact of the airport and a flight-by-night-type of lease. All of that is a lie. We are here to tell you that HABDI is committed to an environmentally safe airport. This has been shown through the Chapter 288 process that was commenced here in the State of Florida with the water management plan, that was approved by the South Florida Water Management District, approved by all the appropriate environmental agencies and ultimately approved by Governor Lawton Chiles and the cabinet.

The environmental safeguards that are built into this project are secured by the 288 process and the permits have been obtained up-to-date on that. We will improve water quality into the bay 35 percent by the year 2005.

The project also brings tremendous economic development and opportunity to the entire Miami-Dade County community, particularly the South Dade County community, where it's most needed, and provides necessary airport capacity that has been discussed by the Aviation Department, the Mayor and the County Manager.

It is critical for our airport transportation system and it's necessary for Miami-Dade County to remain in the forefront in the international trade relative to the 21st Century, the least of which is that the County would be the recipient of the billions of dollars in infrastructure built with HABDI's own money and stated facility for future e-commerce, aircraft maintenance and repair and other facilities to the community, our children and our grandchildren.

HABDI is committed to making this project work both environmentally and economically. We can build a safe airport that would be developed with appropriate mitigation measures implemented per Chapter 288 and whatever mitigation plans are required by the FAA and other environmental agencies.

For these reasons we are urge the Air Force to please consider and respect the SEIS, the process that has occurred to date and we ask that the Air Force along with the other agencies involved, including CEQ, transfer the property to Miami-Dade County.

Thank you.

000048 ALEX ANZARDO: Good evening. My name is Alex Anzardo. I've live in South Dade for over seven

years. For the last twenty-four years I've lived one mile from where the proposed airport will be built. I will gladly put up with any inconvenience caused by the airport, in the hopes that it will bring jobs into this community. In my job I need to travel on a monthly basis, on a daily basis. I am talking about development of not just the city, but Cutler Ridge, Harper's Bazar and Country Star. All these areas, there are thousands of people that live here. If you travel these areas you'll find many homes boarded up, many people out of work.

If you go to other sections, you'll see how many people are in government subsidized housing. These people need jobs. I am very happy that Mayor Alex Penelas and Steve Shiver have joined hands to support this. This is a wonderful cause. Please don't let this slip away.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Ralph Moore.

000049 RALPH MOORE: My name is Ralph Moore and I am a little different than most people that are here tonight, because I am from Community Council Number 15, elected official of a neighborhood surrounding the Homestead Air Force Base. I also work with Job Services in Perrine dealing every day with people out

of work from the neighborhoods the Perrine, Cutler Ridge, Homestead, Florida City, Goulds.

I personally believe that we need jobs. We need jobs badly in our area. Since Hurricane Andrew hit this area the number of people coming to our office has increased enormously. A lot of these businesses in this area have moved out of the area because the base closed and the people have moved out of the area, so businesses have move out of the area also.

We have a large number of people out of work, no place to work, and most of the jobs are headed north of Kendall Drive. These people don't have money to have cars to drive north to get jobs that far north.

I also live a mile from Homestead Air Force Base. Like I said, I've talked to a lot of people, and I wouldn't say all of them feel the same way, but most of them told me they lived there before the base was destroyed by Hurricane Andrew and we had twenty-four flights a day. There was no noise. Everybody was happy. I don't understand why now suddenly everybody is against an airport, when we had one before.

We need the help for people that are out of

work. No one is talking for them here tonight. Those are the people that should be here and saying, "We need jobs."

Out of all the plans, we think the commercial airport will bring the most jobs to our community the fast way, but personally, anything that would bring jobs I'd support. As a representative of a community, we need jobs. We have an air strip. We have a hanger. What is that? That's an airport. It is an airport.

We need, in my opinion, a commercial airport there and that would be the smartest thing that the Air Force can do for the good of the community of this area.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Virginia Pike.

000050 VIRGINIA PIKE: Hello. I am Virginia Pike. I am here tonight in support of the airport. South Florida and Homestead have an opportunity that many cities can dream of, the availability of thirty-eight thousand jobs, economic development which can create new jobs.

As tax payers we spend millions of dollars in environmental and impact studies and every time they come up saying the same thing, there is no

negative environmental impact.

Again, I would like to believe that we all recognize that the human survival, in essence human beings, that means having jobs and supporting our family. This is the Number 1 issue.

The City of Homestead suffered terribly during Hurricane Andrew. I have a few people here that seem to lack common sense and want to destroy it again.

As I stood looking at the Collier/Hoover preliminary master plan over on our left this evening, it says it will bring jobs over time. I think we've been waiting for time in Homestead since 1992.

That's right. I've listened. This is not mean to be rude, but I heard park superintendents become aviation experts tonight and I've listened to residents from the very expensive rich areas of the Florida Keys become environmental experts, and last but certainly not least I've listened to Commissioner Sorenson speak, saying something that sounded outlandishily. Who has she been taking to lately? (Inaudible.)

I think we all in the room know this is a no brainer. We need the airport. We need the jobs.

Thank you.

000051 FRANK NERO: My name is Frank Nero. I am president of the Beacon Council. I have prepared remarks that I'll give as attachments. I am here representing the Beacon Council which is an economic development agency.

Homestead Air Force Base was realigned on March 31, 1994. Prior to this official date, the Air Force Base we all know was severely damaged by Hurricane Andrew. Following that Hurricane, community leaders undertook a mayor study to determine the best need for Homestead Air Force Base. That study, funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, managed by the Beacon Council, utilized proof from a broad base of South Miami citizens.

Let me also point out that it is currently the local community's official plan, and according to the Pratt Procedures, it does have some standing.

The conclusion and recommendation was to develop Homestead Air Force Base as a dual use military/civilian regional reliever airport. The basic premise was that air cargo capacity at Miami International Airport would be reached during the 21st Century. Homestead Air Force Base would serve as a compliment to air traffic.

The aviation industry is expected to

establish a Homestead Regional aircraft maintenance, In addition, aviation education, training were also included. The economic benefit would include above average wages, relatively large employment and relatively large revenue, leading to large employment.

Those forecasts were accurate. In 1992 twenty-six point five million passengers used MIA. By 1998 thirty-four million, a twenty-eight percent increase. Passengers are forecast to reach forty-eight million in 2005.

Likewise, the total number of air cargo was one point one million in '92, and nearly two million tons in 1998 and forecast to reach forty in 2005.

A recently conducted study by the aviation department says we are going to lose our aviation industry here in Miami-Dade County. They are going to move elsewhere.

I chaired the base realignment study in Jacksonville and I can tell you that if we don't have a commercial airport here, not only will we not have the jobs here, we are going to lose the jobs we currently have, because they can't expand. They are going to move out of this area. They are going to move completely out of this town.

I urge you to adopt the recommendation for

the commercial airport for Homestead.

COLONEL McSHANE: Maria Bracket. Nathalie Grignal, Art Fernandez, William Riley, Sheri Lucas, Alberto Notes.

000052 NATHALIE GRIGNAL: I am Nathalie Grignal. I am a stay at home mom. I live in Megan's Place. People mentioned the Opa-Locka Airport as an option, and I thought that was ridiculous. I don't know what can be done if Homestead is not chosen. Since I live two miles from there, I guess I would be affected by the increase in that traffic. Being about fifteen minutes from MIA, I see a few airplanes overhead, but I was puzzled by the option that was brought up by Collier/Hoover to turn it more into a tourist attraction and everything toward the tourist industry.

I am wondering how that's going to work, if tourists fly by here and don't drive sometimes. How are they going to come if MIA is full and Opa-Locka is too narrow for a 47 to 57. They can't expand beyond. That's my question.

000053 ART FERNANDEZ: I know it's getting late. You are getting sand in your eyes. I know you have been hearing repetitious stuff, but I represent a local union of two thousand members. I've lived in Miami-Dade over five years.

During Hurricane Andrew I came down to Goulds and Naranja. We put up over five hundred roofs on the destroyed homes. I was glad to do it. We need jobs. I represent two thousand members like I told you, from seventeen crafts.

I love quality of life. I just have a new grandson. I believe in that Florida life for him, and I believe -- I am a fisherman. I am a golfer. I am an advocate, but we need jobs for our people.

Thank you.

000054 WILLIAM RILEY: Good evening. My name is William Riley, with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Contractors. You've heard several things. You've heard in the year 2015 we are going to be out of airport space. You heard the overwhelming majority of elected officials speak to you about supporting Dade County and its proposal for a commercial airport. You also heard there is no other viable site for this airport.

The jobs that you also heard about tonight that are needed will be created by the airport for the people of Homestead, as well as Dade County, and we would ask that you support the Miami-Dade County proposed commercial airport.

Thank you.

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000055 RAUL HERNANDEZ: My name is Raul Hernandez. I live in Miami Lakes. I am not going to take that much of your time. I know we are tired. If we have Opa-Locka as a reliever airport, that's going to be a tragedy, because that airport is surrounded by a lot of people. One aircraft can wipe out half of Miami Lakes. The opposite side, to do this in Homestead, we have lost a lot of jobs and we need the money. We need to do it.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Alberto Notis, James Willis, Laurie Hourn, Jaime Brown, Eric Greenwood, Mario J. Garcia-Serra and Felix Rodriguez.

000056 JAIME BROWN: My name is Jaime Brown. I am really -- I am looking at the room and there are just a few vocal environmentalists here. Then it dawned on me that most of them had a really long way to drive home.

I've been really privileged over the last few months to work with the folks of Homestead and Florida City trying to get some jobs in the community, and professionally it's one of the most meaningful things that I've worked on. These are the best facts, thirty-eight thousand jobs for this area and one billion dollars in your pocket. That's what is in the

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study.

The other thing that's forgotten up in Washington is that the people who are most impacted by what has happened are low income and minority residents of this town, and the decision-makers and the environmental activists that are heavily involved in the project, they are uncomfortable when they hear that, but that's the truth.

Yesterday I had the privilege of meeting with one of the review leaders. She told me about a teenage boy who is weeping in front of her because he can't find a job to help his family out. These are the kids that turn to drugs and crime, because they are not allowed to have a job. No kid should think they have no choices because their life is done. That's what this is about. Don't say you've made your presence know tonight, when there are people who are making a decision about what you say. They are hearing you and that's what matters.

000355 ANDREW ROSE: My name is Andrew Rose. I've been in this community since 1940. I have comments that relate to the report, the SEIS, because I feel that there hasn't been a true flight operations analysis of the effect of the aviation activity we had in the Homestead airport.

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The example presented on the reports, not one of them talked to the aviation community directly. I challenge anybody to put that many airplanes on a single runway in a twenty-four hour period anywhere in the world.

If you mix light airplanes with the heaviest, we haven't talked about this, only twelve percent of that figure is cargo airplanes. Everything else is passenger and general aviation and military. That's not in the report.

As an example, if two heavy airplanes take off one after the other, at any airport, generally speaking, there is a three minute separation. If you put little airplanes in the mix, it is going to be more than that, because the jet wash from the big airplanes will turn that airplane upside down and tear it apart in some cases.

The other aspect of the report that I have a problem with, the noise diagrams and what have you, are not relating. In other words, they don't tell at what altitude and how that affects other things in the area, whether it's reflected off building or what have you. You can take off some airports in town and it bounces all across town. These are little things that I point out.

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I would like to comment on Katie Sorenson. Ms. Sorenson's comment about no airline would come down here to have service, I don't think she has ever heard of Southwest. Southwest flies out Dallas, Texas, and the big airport is forty miles away, which is further than Miami airport.

As it relates to the movements -- my time is up.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Your name?

000057 MARIO GARCIA-SERRA: Good evening. My name is Mario Garcia-Serra. First, I'd like to thank you and your colleagues for being with us this evening. I am speaking for both sides when I say we are very thankful.

I want to make clear that everyone here, like myself, young, still in school, hopes to raise our future families in Miami-Dade County and support Homestead Area Force Base.

Why? All the facts and consideration point to the Air Force Base as being the obvious location for a relieve airport. Those of us who have traveled out of Miami have faced agonizing lines, frustrating traffic, and we realize that MIA is at full capacity now and needs to be relieved soon.

Homestead is the best place for this airport for many reasons, and having the busiest Air Force Base in the United States for a period of thirty years it has proven it is an environmentally sound decision.

Lastly, the integrity of the base closure must be protected. Let's bring the airport to Homestead Air Force Base.

Thank you very much.

000058 FELIX RODRIGUEZ: Good evening. My name is Felix Rodriguez. I live basically right outside of Miami International Airport. Sometimes I wonder not if, but when. MIA is in the heart of the City of Miami. Unlike other airports, MIA does not have a runway that's adjacent to a body of water and does not allow pilots to bring the planes over water.

Flight 592 went down in the Everglades instead of a populous area, and a terrible tragedy did not result in a catastrophic loss of life.

All of these factors only lead me to one conclusion, that MIA desperately needs relief. As to the proposals, I am not an expert. I am not an environmentalist. I am not -- I can only attest to what I see with my own eyes and what I can gather from the news media.

In today's Miami Herald an editorial was

written, and it said that it must be recognized that whatever redevelopment occurs will include an airport. The Air Force's strip is up and running.

With that said, the Collier proposal offers environmental friendly golf. Of course, as I said before, I am not an expert, but it makes more common sense to conclude that the golf course resource might bring twenty thousand jobs per year.

What many people don't realize is that no matter what happens, the Air Force, rightfully so, uses the runway. I can just imagine coming up to the first tee on the golf course and playing on the green and all of a sudden you have an F-16 over your head. We have the same problem with a business complex next to the airport. It is not a good idea either. Ask the people who survived when Fine Air came crashing down.

I apologize in advance. I am not an environmentalist, but it is better any day of the week than a plane crashing over my house. The most logical and rational conclusion that one can reach is that Homestead Air Reserve Base should be redeveloped as a commercial airport. It will bring thousands of jobs, over one million dollars in revenue.

I implore you not to delay this any longer.

COLONEL McSHANE: Last call for Eric Greenwood.

Next several names are Raul Hernandez, Denise Gomez, Javier Herrera, Brad Sewell and Ana Palma and Ana Marie Castle-Bray.

Who do we have first?

000059 JAVIER HERRERA: Javier Herrera. I am speaking on behalf of the younger generation, who will be receiving the benefits, by saying that this commercial airport in the base will be viable.

The Collier plan will provide jobs, but twenty-four thousand less jobs than the airport will provide, which is at least six hundred fifty million dollars less than the airport.

Obviously the Collier/Hoover is not a plan for recovery. A commercial airport seems to be the more viable answer to the issue.

Thank you.

000060 ANA PALMA: Hello, my name is Ana Palma. I am in favor of the airport, and I think it's time that we provide jobs for our community.

Thank you.

000061 SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Denise. I am in favor of the airport. I just think thirty-eight thousand jobs is a good idea. Think about how many

people that are unemployed will have a job, and how many more kids will be able to eat off these jobs. I think this plan will save a lot of lives.

Thank you.

000062 BRAD SEWELL: My name is Brad Sewell. I am an attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council. I want to focus on the SEIS and talk about what is in the SEIS, and have a discussion about it.

The information in the SEIS and the conclusion that can be drawn from the SEIS and could be drawn from the information in the SEIS, people need to realize that because of conflicts with Miami International to the north, the planes from Homestead have to fly lower for longer than they otherwise would. The altitude of the planes in this area will be fairly low.

As said by several speakers this evening, that's quite a few dozens of flights over various locations in the area. For example, in the Biscayne National Park they've estimated one hundred five flights a day, at an altitude of two thousand to four thousand. At this distance a commercial jet sounds like the equivalent of a lawnmower or New York City train. As far out as Elliott Key the jets will sound like a garbage disposal. Think about that.

Also, the proposed plan area will increase pollution in Biscayne Bay. The airport will also significantly increase into the bay, things like carcinogens and hydrocarbons.

It sounds like an awful thing. The development of an airport will destroy thousands of acres of adjacent land.

Now, that's the information. What conclusions can be drawn? That's where we see the various agencies and federal government going the separate ways. You need to recognize that the SEIS put forth their conclusion, and that the FAA is in the business of developing airports and insuring that as many planes as possible can fly out of here, so think of their agenda.

The Department of Interior, which discussed the environmental impact and the preferred alternatives, they are the steward of national resources in the environment of South Dade and the national parks. Think about who you wish to believe.

The FAA's conclusion is that there is no noise problem from the airport. You might question that. The noise level, the FAA works to protect you from the sound made by a dishwasher next to you, think about having a barbecue. Do you want to perpetually

hear the noise of a dishwasher? That's the sound FAA wants to protect you from, not the natural park.

Think carefully about this decision and we suggest that you seriously consider the various alternatives.

Thank you.

000063 ANA MARIE CASTLE-BRAY: Good evening. My name is Ana Marie Bray. I was born and raised in Miami-Dade County, and I wanted to say in favor of the proposed action, during school, I always fly out of Fort Lauderdale, simply because it was impossible to get a flight out of Miami, and the flights that we were able to get were extremely expensive, much more so than flying out of Fort Lauderdale. Every time we had to go back and forth, I made the track up to Fort Lauderdale so I can fly.

The need for a reliever airport is nothing new. It is something that we knew for a long time. A couple of suggestions have been put forth with respect to which alternative is possible.

With respect to the airport, I am going to follow up on some of the things that Felix said earlier. With respect to accidents and potential problems with the Opa-Locka Airport, it's in a very heavily residential area and has a great deal of

problems.

When the Department of the Interior conducted the original SEIS in 1994, Opa-Locka was not even mentioned as a possible alternative. In the SEIS, reasons were given why that was so. The first reason was that Opa-Locka Airport, its longest runway, even considering all possible expansions and extensions, it can't accommodate non-stop, long haul service.

The second reason, and probably the most important reason, is the air space constraints. The airport is located between Miami International Airport and Fort Lauderdale Airport. There will be a lot of, I guess, airplanes crossing in the same space at the same time, which presents a very large problem for air traffic controller, trying to make sure there aren't any accidents, when you have such a small area of space and three airports trying to fly constantly. It creates a great deal of problems, and they are specifically stated in the most recent SEIS.

Additionally, this is where I am going to follow up on what was said before me. It's a very, very heavily residential area, probably one of the most residential areas in the entire County, and to have flights leaving from that airport is not really

possible.

So finally I'll just say, it's clear that Miami-Dade County needs another airport. That's been known for a long time. It's nothing new. It's equally clear that Homestead, not Opa-Locka, is the best location for that airport.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: I am going to call Raul Hernandez and Denise Gomez. Was that Denise that spoke after Ana Palma or was that somebody else? I don't have Denise here.

The next name is Martin Dendaw and he was here earlier, but he had to leave. He's left a statement with me. It will be included in the record and given equal weight as any.

I want to remind everybody that's here, if you don't get a chance to speak tonight, you can make written comments.

I can't pronounce the first name, Oickia Lucas, from Leisure City, Florida. Anybody named Lucas? Maybe they are gone.

Next name is Alex Heckler, Michael Stevens, Mary Finlan, Gary Beck, Adams Koslofsky.

000064 ALEX HECKLER: Ladies and gentlemen and distinguished panel. I am a student. I am a graduate

student at the University of Miami Law School, and Miami-Dade County citizen. I am before you this evening to publicly place my opinion on the record. I've been here for over five hours, and the reason is because I want to share my thoughts, that will hopefully be included during the decision-making process.

I am pro environment. I enjoy and respect our national parks and wildlife. However, I am in strong support of economic development in South Miami-Dade County. I am in favor of an airport compatible with our environment. That's Homestead Regional Airport.

As a representative of Miami-Dade County's younger generation, I urge you to think for the future and plan accordingly. We must act now.

According to the FAA, within the next ten years Miami-Dade County will need a reliever airport. If we do not plan now, by the year 2006 will be too late. I'll be twenty-nine at that time. I would like to be included as part of the thirty-eight thousand jobs and one billion dollars in income.

Also, something that a lot of people might not realize is that when we are talking about the jobs and the one billion dollars, it's not just the

airport. It's all the folks who have come here that own businesses around the airport, and the restaurants around the airport. That's very important, because the people who are struggling today, who live in Homestead and surrounding areas, will gain relief from this, and they will develop themselves economically.

I want to bring up a word that I haven't heard this evening which I feel is very important. That's co-existing. When I looked at the Miami-Dade County proposal, I saw a picture of a bird and that picture is an example of co-existence.

Over the last fifty years, human wildlife and our national parks have co-existed and that's very important. People don't realize that.

I have a niece who is seven years old, and will be seventeen years old when Miami-Dade County needs a reliever airport. I want her to be able to benefit from this, and my family and all the folks here.

I wanted to remind everybody, for our future, please act now and do not delay anymore, and thank you everybody for waiting five and half hours.

000065 ADAM KOSLOFSKY: Good evening. My name is Adam Koslofsky. I live in Key Largo, Florida, Monroe County.

I have the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of the thousands of members of Reef Relief of South Florida, based in Key West, Florida. Our organization is dedicated to preserve and protect the living coral eco system. Therefore, we are particularly concerned over the environmental impact of this proposed activity, the conversion of the surplus Homestead Air Force Base property into a commercial airport, would have upon the coral reef eco system of South Florida, including the people that live near it and visit it annually.

The impasse is air pollution, noise, wetland destruction and stormwater are an inequitable and unavoidable risk of a commercial airport and facilities.

The result will be a deterioration of the environment, quality of the coral reef and the eco system that acts as a critical habitat to endangered and otherwise protected wildlife.

The impact to the integrity and Everglades National Park and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary by this federal action are unacceptable and in direct conflict with the purposes of their creation.

In addition, you'll find out that a

commercial airport, although it is described in the SEIS as incentive to boost to local economy, would have long term negative impact and affect future activities associated with the region, particularly eco tourism.

As an environmental organization, we would prefer an alternative in the SEIS, that is that the federal government retain ownership of the remaining one thousand six hundred thirty-two acres of the former Homestead Air Force Base and do nothing with the land.

We therefore strongly recommend that the Air Force and the Federal Aviation Administration should use other alternatives for economic development of a comprehensive sustainable development plan.

Thank you very much.

000066 MARY FINLAN: My name is Mary Finlan. I live in the City of Homestead. I am on the Homestead/Florida City Chamber of Commerce.

Regarding the survey that Katie Sorenson mentioned earlier, in July of 1997 South Dade residents in the zip code area south of 216 Street and 207 Avenue, thirteen thousand nine hundred residential numbers, I would only be asking them a single question, "Do you support economic redevelopment of

Homestead Air Force Base into a commercial airport?"

69.3 percent of those people said: Yes.

As a professional survey that was done by a valid corporation, and if the local consensus is of any value to this committee, that's the local consensus. I am going to leave this with you for the record, this survey here.

We all know we need tourism. We know our economy is bad, and we are not going to shut up. We'll take care of our environment. We don't need to be told that by people from the outside.

000067 MARK RIFF: I'll be real quick. I've a got a couple of questions about the redevelopment of the Air Force Base. Do you think or do you accept the Collier/Hoover plan, and everybody keeps saying that the administrating government, they are going to trade the federal government their oil and mineral rights. Folks, you know, realistically I don't see you doing that. That is not a win, win.

This community needs jobs bad. In the SEIS, Biscayne National Park airplanes flying are not near as bad as the landfill that's been expanded three times right up against Biscayne National Park.

Thank you.

000068 DR. JOSEPH G. SEWELL: Good evening, Mr.

Chair, those of you that are here tonight. I am Dr. Joseph Sewell of the Baptist Church, a man of faith. We've heard a lot tonight about the environment, but I would like in this political climate to quote something that I found from the Father of the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence.

It says "All hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that we have legal rights to the pursue of life, prosperity."

We men have been enabled with rights. It said we humans. It doesn't say we birds or we fish or we pigeons have rights, but we humans have been allowed the legal rights to the pursue of life. Human life is very important.

I am pastor of a church in this area. Some come from Princeton, from Perrine, from Goulds, from Florida City.

I see these mothers, we want to put them back to work. Okay. They are on welfare. There are no jobs. You train them to work. Have you ever looked at a mother that brings her child to a day care that I have in my church, and she says, "Pastor, give my baby some milk, because I don't have milk."

A man that has a skill, but there is no job. You are trying to service these people, and you see

the hopelessness in their eyes.

This gentleman, the superintendent of parks, he says, "Go to Miami International Airport. What do you see?"

I want you to come in my community and see some things. See the hopelessness, see the despair, see the look in folks' eyes when they have a skill, but they don't have jobs.

We need jobs. We need jobs. The people need jobs. We have people with degrees that can't work. We have people that are skilled. We have single mothers with children.

Please, listen to the heartbeat of this community. We need jobs in the City of Homestead.

Thank you.

000069 STEVE SAPP: Thank you, Colonel. My name is Steve Sapp. I am president of Dade County Farm Bureau. We have three thousand members in our organization. If you look at the demographics of our agriculture area, there are eighty-three thousand acres of agriculture grid in the state of Florida in the most recent study.

I have to tell you that one of the things that upsets me most about public hearings is that there appears to be division in our community. I hate

that more than I hate anything else in the community. I rather see people work and iron out the situation, whether it's the politicians who comes and take a position or whether it's the people in the community.

We support the commercial development of the airport at Homestead Air Force Base and we support it for two reasons. Number 1, that will have a great effect on the community. Our farm community, we are smart enough to look at the future and realize that Cuba is going to be a major market one day, as well as the Caribbean and South America and Mexico. It is very clear the direction that our community is taking and we as agriculturers need and understand the airport is going to be critical to the future on agriculture.

Number 2, and more importantly, because that first reason is pretty selfish, for the agricultural industry to sustain itself and continue.

The second reason is a community reason. Our community is in trouble. The infrastructure of our community is falling apart around us. Our health care -- our hospital has lost money for over seven years in a row, over seven million dollars. We are not going to replace that seven million dollars unless

we have economic development. We need a good transportation system down here. There is very little good planning that is going on in our area of South Dade. We already have traffic problems, but nobody is saying, "Let's fix it." They are closing their eyes.

We look to our economy and we say to ourselves, we have a fifteen percent unemployment rate down here. The second reason for us to support the redevelopment of the air base is for the community's needs. We look at our neighbors, whether it's in Florida City or Homestead, Naranja or Goulds, and we look at them as our friends and our neighbors and we say, "Seven years is enough. It's time to stand up, and bring the jobs to the community that two presidents promised to us."

Thank you very much.

0000070 BRUCE DRUM: Good evening. My name is Bruce Drum. I am here tonight as a public servant. I've been working for Dade County for almost twenty-four years. I've been in aviation for twenty-eight years. I've been following the airlines for about thirty-five years.

I am assistant to the aviation director commissioner, so I am offering a little bit to this conversation from an aviation standpoint. I think I

have something to put forth here today. Basically the commerce is two separate issues, if I may.

I am encouraged by the process, but one of my jobs was being chair of the Noise Task Force fifteen years ago, under the direction of the county manager. I feared at first, and tonight's meeting reminded me of that process.

What we did at Miami International Airport is put together thirty-something representatives of the communities around Miami, along with aviation experts, to try to come together and find a common goal of reducing the noise impact to our communities. Almost an oximoron, how to you find a middle ground to something diametrically opposed, but I need to tell you a story, because there is a happy ending.

Despite those differences, despite those polarized positions, we managed to find, in two years' hard work, every month we'd come to a common position that we have submitted to the FAA. We are now doing a tube test for both east flow and west flow that will reduce the noise levels.

The aircrafts will fly as much as possible over water and non-residential areas. We are proud of that establishment. I think what we have to learn here about the noise issue is -- let me point out

there has been a lot of misinformation, but from the aviation standpoint, some of the representations about noise, this is a starting point.

One of the things that we can do -- one of things that we are required to do is to put together a noise abatement plan.

One last comment I will leave you with, the airport has been banged around here tonight. I think we have a lot to develop. Remember one thing, if we do not get this airport, in my professional opinion, we are going to run out of capacity in South Florida and fifteen years from now, when we do run out of capacity, when you are on that airplane or that relative is on that airplane in Miami, and the pilot comes out and says you are thirty-two for take-off, I want you to remember this night.

We have a very important decision to make in this community and I salute the process.

0000071 JONATHAN ULLMAN: My name is Jonathan Ullman. I am a South Florida Everglades representative for the National Sierra Club. I am at this meeting today. I am here to protect Homestead and the people who visit the national parks from all over this country from hideous plans which have been concocted by special interest, and what we are going to do is we are going

to expose this plan to the rest of the country.

We are going to explain to them how Miami-Dade County has tried to push a commercial airport a mile and a half from a national park, eight and a half miles from another national park, which the Clinton-Gore administration is trying to restore for seven point eight billion dollars.

Why would the tax payers want to pay seven point eight billion dollars? Everglades National Park each year will have to be subjected to constant flights. How are you going to explain to those visitors that you sold those two national parks to a special group in Miami-Dade County, and we all saw the politicians that paraded here and took away all of the time from the public.

Those politicians are not representing the people. Those politicians are representing this Company. We are now going to start the campaign throughout this country. We already showed this issue in thirty cities throughout the United States. It will continue, and believe me, this travesty will not continue.

Thank you.

0000072 TRISHA MORAN: My name is Trisha Moran. I represent the Keys Academy of Marine Science. I am a

lifetime resident of Key Largo, and I am not rich. I am a teacher. I have brought with me here tonight some of my students, and I am reflecting not only on my own personal views, but their views as well.

The curriculum of our school includes a section on preserving our environment, and we believe that this is a perfect way to teach our children what their future should look like. We do not want that future to be clouded by the sounds of airplanes. We vehemently oppose an airport in Homestead.

I have enjoyed much peace and quiet since the Air Force Base was destroyed by Hurricane Andrew. I have been able to go to Molasses Reef and not hear an F-16 fly overhead as I am trying to enjoy the waves. That is a silence that to me and to my students is precious.

I find it very interesting that no one has talked about the water park that has been proposed for Miami-Dade County. I also found it very interesting that no one has mentioned the Miami-Dade Homestead Motor Sport Complex which has also provided numerous jobs. The latest addition is Wall-Mart, another example of jobs provided to the Homestead area.

I do not care if there are two hundred thirty thousand flights a year. I do not care if

there are one hundred thousand flights or fifty thousand. Either way is too much. It disturbs my peace. It disturbs the peace of the endangered species like the salt water crocodile, who most people in the United States don't know still exists here.

I recent it when groups like the Farm Bureau, who make it a habit of attacking endangered species, and this is not just a Miami Dade county issue. This is a Monroe County issue and a Key Largo issue.

My students believe that jobs are not as important as our environment and I am very upset that no one values these children and their ideas.

Thank you.

000073 HOWARD BEHAR: Hello, my name is Howard Behar. I am citizen of Miami-Dade County. What I believe is that absolutely it is critical in the decision making process for the Federal government to convey this former Air Force Base over to either the County or a viable developer. Remember that the property is being conveyed in fee simple. That is a very powerful thing.

There is only one proposal throughout the entire SEIS that even mentions that they have a firm contract, a commitment to do what they indicate they

will do in the SEIS, and that's to build an airport. All the other proposals we've seen are mere proposals. We have not seen one contract, one firm commitment by either the Collier or the Hoover proposals or any of the other proposals.

The South Florida Management District indicates they will build what they intend to bill. What I believe is that this is a Trojan Horse. We do not know what this commitment is. All we know is that the photographs -- that have been removed -- is the proposal.

Now, assuming that they want to do as they indicate in SEIS, which is to build this RV park/golf course, I believe that all the things we discussed here tonight -- tremendous input from everybody -- indicates a very simple economic impact.

Number 1, the least job intensive. That's a quote from the SEIS. Seventeen thousand jobs from the thirty-eight thousand. Least economic revenue, two hundred sixty versus eight billion.

Most important, however, and I would like to close on this point, it is a tremendous loss that would be suffered by Miami-Dade County in losing the opportunity to take a property fee simple and generate an economic boom to Miami-Dade County rather than the

property being turned over to private hands for private developers, for private profit, as opposed to profit that's realized by every citizen of Miami-Dade County.

Thank you.

000074 KAREN SALAS: My name is Karen Salas. I am also a citizen of Miami-Dade County. About a week and a half ago I read a letter that was written to the Miami Herald by someone claiming that the airport would be the most damaging alternative in the long run, because how could somebody enjoy the parks and the beauty of them if they had to see it with a commercial aircraft flying overhead. That made me wonder: Do all the airport opponents realize that there is going to be an airport base there?

The Homestead Air Force has been active for decades. For years there have been airplanes flying overhead.

The SEIS itself reported that the maximum noise level would be from military aircrafts, not commercial aircrafts. Regardless of what alternative is used, either way military aircrafts will still be flying over the air.

In addition, the SEIS confirmed that the airport will be environmentally compatible. The

important question is, which alternative provides the most benefits. Miami-Dade has the highest unemployment in the state and one of the highest unemployment in the County. The SEIS found that the airport proposal will provide over twenty thousand more jobs than the Collier alternative. That's a total of thirty-eight thousand jobs.

So which alternative provides most benefits? I say the airport.

Opponents of the airport asked to have the SEIS report done, and they have gotten it done. Now the report itself says that the airport is environmentally compatible. What else do we need to do to get our airport?

000075 CONNIE CHAPELL: My name is Connie Chapell. I am here as a parent, a community person from upper Key Largo and as an educator. I am the director of the Keys Academy of Marine Science, and really, you know, I wish that Miami politician were here, because I grew up across from the Opa-Locka Airport in 1966 and I think of what is so beautiful about this area, so much of it's agriculture, the clean air and all the beautiful surroundings that you have, and then I think that thirty years from now it will be interesting to see if this area would look like Opa-Locka Airport and

the area surrounding Opa-Locka Airport.

It really concerns me that very few people here tonight have addressed education.

I think that education and jobs come hand in hand. If we would spend more time and truly educate our children, educate the public, there are a lot of mixed emotions and mixed messages about what should be done with that land. I look at the kids' future and I look thirty years from now and is Homestead and the area around the airport going to look like Opa-Locka? If it does, it's really sad because South Florida has very little to offer people that come to it, outside of the water, tourism, what is around us, and I think that we really need to look at taking care of that, preserving that.

Key Largo is the second largest reef system in the world, the only one connected to the continent of North America, yet we are so quickly to do something that would affect that.

Fifty years ago our visibility was a lot greater than it is today. Our kids twenty years from now won't be able to see the reef. I think there needs to be compromise. I think that further studies need to be done.

When I look as an educator at the

Collier/Hoover project, versus an airport, as an educator I hope that we are teaching children to go for professional jobs, jobs in agriculture, aquaculture, biomedicine, biochemical, not loading and unloading planes and I think South Florida needs to care about that.

I know we need jobs, but I also think that we should look at preserving our environment and finding the best alternative, not just a fix for the quick short term, but for the future of South Florida and putting on the map something positive and not something negative.

Thank you.

000076 BARBARA LANGE: My name is Barbara Lange. I am with the Sierra Club. The SEIS assumes that the stormwater management plan for Homestead is going to work, as promoted by Mayor Penelas and Dade County. Sierra challenged in state court the plan on the grounds that the County's own expert stated the plan was inadequate to handle large storms. If the system does not perform adequately, the toxic chemicals and other pollutants, that the SEIS assumes this will never reach the bay will reach the bay.

The SEIS states that they are highly concerned about the stormwaters plan retention and

distention, because you attract birds. The site currently has a bird strike risk that appears to be four to five times the national average.

The SEIS assumes that the proposed airport will be responsible for only two thousand of the ten to twenty thousand vacant lands in South Dade County that will be lost to development in the next fifteen years. This is an extremely important finding. It is not specifically supported and it appears insupportable.

The airport is responsible for closer to fifty percent of the new development or the development that occurs outside the current EVD line.

The SEIS fails to consider canals to the north and to the south of Mallory and Princeton which will certainly bear some impact on the secondary development associated with the airport.

Because Biscayne Bay is considered oversaturated with nutrients, any increase should be considered significant. While recognizing the example that the use of hazardous materials in South Dade will increase twelve times when the airport is developed, the Draft SEIS assumes the proposition that pollutants throughout the area will remain unchanged.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: COLONEL McSHANE: William Delgado.

000077 WILLIAM DELGADO: Good evening. My name is William Delgado. I represent the Latin Builders Association. It's an association that represents six hundred firms that are in the construction industry here in Dade County.

I, having a real estate background, can share with you that the people in the real estate profession say that the secret to a successful development is location, location, location. If I heard anything here tonight, from Hialeah to Sweetwater to Key Biscayne to Florida City and finally the Mayor of Homestead and the Mayor of Miami-Dade County, the secret word here tonight is jobs, jobs, jobs.

All of our community can benefit from this project. This Draft presented here tonight proves that we can have a commercial airport in Homestead that is thoroughly intune with the environment. For those of you elected officials -- they left -- that have supported the Collier plan, I guess that they are looking at the rich families of West Palm Beach. Looking at Dade County, they have enough Hispanic and Afro-Americans to be caddies and ground keepers in the

huge golf course. No, thank you. We believe we can do better getting jobs in the construction industry or a commercial airport.

You people need to get up to speed and know that there is a new champion on the golf courses of the United States. His name is Tiger Woods.

COLONEL McSHANE: Next name is Paul Acosta.

000078 PAUL ACOSTA: Thank you for this opportunity to speak and your patience this evening. I've been a resident of Dade County now for thirty years. I here pretty much raised down here in the South Dade area, grew up fishing in the Florida Bay, grew up fishing in Key Largo, grew up fishing off of Biscayne Bay, so I cherish those memories. I cherish the environment here.

I also have had many friends, many family members that sustained many losses during Hurricane Andrew. This community continues to sustain losses. Every day that goes by without a development taking place on that airport ground is another loss to this community.

The young lady that spoke earlier and she mentioned that some of the projects that have come down have contributed to this community, I am glad she mentioned one, the Homestead Motor Sports Complex.

Some projects have come, but there is an unemployment rate of approximately fifteen percent. That's the highest in the County, Ladies and Gentlemen.

What we have before us is a very unique and exciting opportunity, but with that opportunity comes great responsibility which rests upon a critical decision, and that is whether or not we will permit the development of a commercial airport here at the Homestead Air Force Base.

It's very simple. When we look at it, it is really not that complicated. The first question we need to answer: Is there a need for a reliever airport? I believe the SEIS report has already spoken to that. In fact, much of the testimony tonight here indicates that by the year 2006 we will experience problems with MIA, which will be exceeding its capacity.

As a resident of Dade County, living here, I experienced and I see people constantly within the central area of Dade County and northern area, they go to Fort Lauderdale. They don't want to fly out of our airport. It is too congested. That is today.

Next question, because I think the first one has been answered, we do need a reliever airplane.

The second question: Where do we put it?

Some of them say, "Put it in Opa-Locka." I think the SEIS answers that question. There is an airline crossing concern as well, because of the proximity to Fort Lauderdale and MIA. They are concerned about the links to the runway. The answer is Homestead. There is no doubt about it.

The economic viability of the airport site down here, thirty-eight thousand jobs, when you put that in perspective, Miami-Dade County government is one of the biggest employers in Dade County, and it generates twenty-eight thousand jobs.

Thank you for your patience.

000079 MARY MOTES: Well, I am not going to say what I thought I would say. I just wanted to say that I have become sick and tired this evening of the word job. It's been tossed around like motherhood and apple pie. I think although we have a lot of talk about the Air Force Base, in the back of my mind I feel that we have a small group of businessmen and folks interested in economic development and a lot of those folks are going to make a great deal of money out of this, and I wish our friends from Naranja were still here.

I have a nasty feeling at the end of the day that most of those folks in Florida City and Naranja

and Goulds will be pretty much where they were before, and I don't think that this is going to become the great fantasy they are talking about.

I don't know why there hasn't been more talk about the other jobs available in the other opportunities. We have heard the term jobs, jobs, jobs all night, and I would also like to -- the racial kind of slurs thrown around this evening and I think the sneering at retirees were very unpleasant.

When I was thinking of economic base and the fact that so many people give up everything, they give up their home, they put their life savings, and they have a family, to retire, I think they have as much value and need to be concerned as any people in Florida City or anywhere else.

I speak as a white middle class woman, and I don't think that this means I cannot address those kinds of things because of being accused of being partisan.

I think Florida City officials should be concerned about the water, quality of the life, as anybody else. It should be everyone's concern to try to raise their level of income and not use this patronizing attitude. I don't want to talk anymore about jobs, jobs, jobs tonight.

000080 MICHAEL CHENOWETH: Good evening. My name is Michael Chenoweth. I am president of Friends of the Everglades. I came here tonight to address the issues of the draft SEIS. Many of the speakers before me have been speaking either pro or con on the different alternatives that have been proposed, and I didn't know that was what we were here for, but I want to say that in case there is any question, Friends of the Everglades is definitely opposed unequivocally to the commercial airport proposal.

I am a lawyer. I am formally also a vice president of a commuter airline. I am retired from the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and the SEIS is written in a very clever way, by a pro development, pro airport consultant firm, to minimize the impact of this commercial airport. Not only does it minimize the adverse noise and pollution impact, it fails to adequately depict the impact a commercial airport will have on traffic, crime and the quality of schools among other kids in the vicinity.

The SEIS should examine, and it doesn't, the prior record of Dade County in addressing these critical issues and the existing commercial airport. There is a strong likelihood that Dade County's record of failure in these critical areas be repeated in

Homestead if a commercial airport is built.

The SEIS, that purports to support the protection of the Everglades, endorses a commercial airport. That lacks believability. The need for jobs that has been expressed here by proponents of the proposed action is really a cry for better jobs, because most of these people already have jobs.

You know, there is unemployment, but certainly most of the people who are standing here in front of us are well fed and have jobs. The SEIS needs to address these issues. Those people who put people ahead of the environment have forgotten that we humans are at the top of the food chain. That means we are all dependent on the environment for our existence.

Much to the benefit of our environment in the south end is the ability to get away from the noise and the commercial activity. This opportunity is where the SEIS fails to make it clear. No consideration is given in the SEIS to building another runway at Miami International, because the County doesn't want to. Jobs at any cost is really the problem that we have to address for the future of the United States, because when we have the question of jobs over everything, that's what we are going to be

facing in every issue we do, and we have to come up with the right answer or our world is not going to be livable.

Thank you.

000081 ROB SKINNER: My name is Rob Skinner. I am president of the Mangrove Academy Wild League. I would like to ask the question, how many people in the room would put a cargo airport near the Grand Canyon? That's what you are thinking of doing by putting it near two national parks.

If I spoke to somebody in Connecticut or Maine or Michigan about something like this, because this is not just a local issue, this is a state and national issue -- this is a national treasure you are talking about -- I wonder how many of those people would agree? "Who is suggesting such a ridiculous proposal? It's being done, and in Dade County you expect that.

Now, going back about thirty years just for one second, they had a jetport concept out in the middle of the Everglades. Thirty years ago they had to have it out there, because MIA was too crowded back in the '70s. Every speaker got up and said the same thing, flight attendants, pilots, port authority, the mayor, assistant mayor, so we defeated that.

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They wanted to have a monorail out there. The people and conservation groups defeated it. Why? Because it doesn't make any sense.

Thirty years later I've listened, today, to the same old story, jobs, jobs, jobs. We have to have jobs. Well, I am sorry.

We were one of the founders of Biscayne National Park. During that time we had a room of people screaming for a oil refinery and a room of people screaming for a bridge from Key Biscayne to Largo, and some people that wanted to pour hot water into the bay. We defeated every single one of them, just like we are going to defeat this one way or another.

I have an endorsement by the City of Opa-Locka Commission stating they would prefer to have the airport in Opa-Locka. People have said you can't have it out there. Metro-Dade signed a lease agreement with Seiko International for eighty million dollars to Opa-Locka. Our own commissioners were screaming and yelling earlier in the session. They were saying we need to have it here, and they are signing contracts right now that I have in my briefcase for Opa-Locka.

If you want jobs, put the jobs where they

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belong, in Opa-Locka and north Dade.

Now, going a step further, risking Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park, National Marine Sanctuary and all these are subjected to noise water and pollution. Let's stop it. If we can't stop it one way, we are going to take you to court and we'll tie it up.

Thank you.

000082 CHARLES ALDEN: Good evening. Thanks for hanging in there with us this evening. My name is Charles Alden. I am a twenty-two year resident of Perrine, smack in the north wall of Hurricane Andrew, and a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, and one of the original corporate members of the Environmental League of Greater Miami.

I've taken some time to carefully review the supplemental summary of the SEIS. I've taken this approach because Biscayne Bay National Park and Everglades National Park are both in unique unreplaceable, sensitive, natural environments and in my judgment could be overriding priority of air protection as a national asset.

Now, I am from out of town. I am from Perrine. It gets even worse than that, because my older sister and brother-in-law happen to be Yankees

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from the north and they happen to be camping this week and last week in Everglades National Park, and I think they are really enjoying the solitude of the Everglades on this vacation, and they'll be back.

The tables that I've submitted in my memo go back and analyze the language of the National Park Service Act. The fundamental purpose of the act is to conserve the wildlife within the national park life, by such means as will leave them unimpaired.

The tables that I am submitting in this memo to the Air Force are extracted from Pages 38 to 53, and it is mentioned by the two viable alternatives discussed in the report. I found the report between thirty-eight and fifty-three to have been rather complexed, incoherent and it was a real task to extract from that documents the two sides of information, so I can compare apples to apples. That however is being submitted and it's very important.

In view of the negative impacts attributable in the report to the airport alternative, the extent of those impact upon existing conditions, and also data performed for a mixed use alternative and the impact between the alternative in view of my understanding of the organic act, it is inconceivable to me that this report would confer the airport

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proposal as a proposed action.

Clearly the airport alternative should be prohibited, in favor of some other alternative which substantially lower adverse impact. This is not a question of jobs. It's a question of one type of job versus another type of job.

Thank you.

000083 BART MOTES: Thanks very much. I want to say a few things. First of all, President Hoover said the only problem with capitalism is that it leads to greed.

In these cases we are talking about speculation as opposed to long term investment. There are going to be a few jobs? There is going to be long term development here? I don't think so. I think what is going to happen, we are going to have an eyesore in our community.

I was here after the Hurricane Andrew. I remember looking up and instead of seeing inspiring formations of F-15 jets, of F-14 jets -- I don't know the technical terms -- but I looked up two thousand feet above my house -- it seemed like one hundred feet -- and there was a huge cargo plane. I remember that after the Hurricane.

We appreciated the aid very much, but having

that for the rest of my life that I am going to spend here in South Florida is not what I relish.

I want to say I admire the courage of Mayor Shiver to come out here and do something that's gutsy, to declare political suicide in a place that's a narrow vote margin, and we have ways to defeat him and send him packing, and those are consequences.

This is not a win. You are not going to have the financial sugardaddy. You have a small gain after this and we are going to go after the Sunshine Law and see where the money goes, all these bids and all this information.

I want to say I am disgusted by the fact that not a single person revealed their financial gains. I don't have any financial motivation to be up here, unlike so many people that stood up here and spoke. If you want to make money, tell us why you want to make money, tell us how much money you are going to make, and we can appreciate that.

Thank you very much.

000084 JOSE ROMERO: Good evening. I know it's a little late, so I am going to be short and sweet. I am a resident of Miami-Dade for the last thirty-four years. I am also an owner of MCL Lumber, which is in Naranja, I would like to make some money in the

airport development here in Homestead, because since 1992, it's been eight years, you know, we've been waiting for development down here in Naranja and nothing has developed here.

Prior to Andrew we used to hire thirty people. Now we only have fifteen. You can see the difference. My business is fifty percent of what it used to be, because the area is devastated. People moved out and never moved in. Why? Because there are no jobs. There are no jobs. Most men can't find jobs --

COLONEL McSHANE: Folks, settle down.

JOSE ROMERO: I think we all here have an interest, and I hope I can make money. I've been losing money for the last eight years. I pay my taxes like you and anybody else.

Everybody else left. Andrew destroyed my home. What I did, I stayed, and I am still there. I've been there for thirty years and I am going to still be there for a long time.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you.

We are at the time where we need to wrap it up and clear out of here. I am going to adjourn the hearing at 11:45 p.m.

CERTIFICATE

STATE OF FLORIDA)
) SS:
COUNTY OF DADE)

I, NIEVES SANCHEZ, Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Florida at Large, hereby certify that the foregoing pages, numbered from 1 to 159, inclusive, are a true and correct transcription of the stenographic notes of the proceedings had and testimony taken in the foregoing case, at the time and place hereinabove set forth.

I further certify that I am not of counsel, I am not related to nor employed by an attorney to this suit, nor interested in the outcome thereof.

The foregoing certification does not apply to any reproduction of this transcript by any means unless under the direct control and/or direction of the certifying shorthand reporter.

Dated at Miami, Dade County, Florida, this 18th day of February 2000.

Nieves Sanchez Commission # CC 849228 Expires Aug. 11, 2003 Bonded Thru Atlantic Bonding Co., Inc.

NIEVES SANCHEZ, Shorthand Reporter

Transcript of
Public Hearing

February 2, 2000
10:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Signature Gardens
12725 SW 122nd Avenue
Kendall, Florida

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL

IMPACT STATEMENT

ORIGINAL

DISPOSAL OF PORTIONS OF THE FORMER

HOMESTEAD AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA

PUBLIC MEETING

12725 S.W. 122 Avenue

Miami, Florida

February 2, 2000

10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

The public meeting was held before COLONEL MICHAEL B. McSHANE, Chief Trial Judge.

(Thereupon, the following proceedings were held in private.)

000085 RAE S. NEWMAN: Hello. My name is Rae Newman. I live in Dade County, and I love the environment. I enjoy visiting the national parks and I enjoy seeing the wildlife. The proposed commercial airport would be located between two endangered national parks, Biscayne and Everglades. Both parks attract a great many birds and other wildlife.

The amount of air traffic that would be apparent if a commercial airport were established at the Homestead Air Force Base location would make collisions with birds much more prevalent. Not only would that pose a great danger to the birds, but also a great danger to the people flying in and out of this airport.

Additionally, the noise of a plane flying right over the national parks would greatly change the serenity that now exists there. If a cargo airport also were established at this location, trucks would then have to carry cargo from Homestead north to Dade County, Broward County and all points north along an already overcrowded US-1 or 874 expressway.

Please reconsider locating this commercial airport at Opa-Locka which is the other locale which

has been proposed, and which is located more in the center of commerce and development.

We need all the open space and all the diversity that we can preserve.

000086 KATHY BARBER: My name is Kathleen Barber. I reside at 11321 Southwest 100 Avenue. I am a forty year resident of Miami. I am speaking today as a Miami resident and a member of the Sierra Club. I am in opposition to the proposed redevelopment of the Homestead Air Force base as a commercial airport.

It will have a negative impact on the South Florida environment. I would like alternative plans, alternative arrangements to be sought to preserve our environment, our water resources and my natural life and your native wildlife. I would like the Everglades to be preserved for my two children, ages five and two, so they have an opportunity to grow up in South Florida and view it just as I have in the past forty years.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

I have one further objection. The original planned redevelopment of the Homestead Air Force base was never publicly bid. There was never public input. If there is a decision to reuse this area for commercial purpose, it should be open for competitive

bidding and public information.

Thank you very much to your attention.

000087 DONNA KALIL: I oppose the commercial airport for environmental reasons and health reasons. I believe it wouldn't be good for our state parks or the health of our citizens here in Miami. I support the international spaceport instead. I believe that this will bring in high tech jobs and would be a better alternative for the environment.

Thank you.

000088 STEVE KRONEN: My name is Steve Kronen. I just want to record my strong opposition to the airport being placed in the Everglades here. It's an ecological disaster. It must be stopped.

000089 PATRICIA H. HACKETT: My name is Patricia Hackett. My question is: Given the fact that there was an Air Force base before, I'd like to know the increase in air traffic should a regular airport, civilian airport be established, and how would this interface with the air reserve base traffic, because people have commented that there was an Air Force base there before, and, yes, that's true, however will the traffic be the same, quadrupled, ten times?

I'd like to know what the air traffic would be in comparison to what it was when the active Air

Force Base was there?

Naturally I am concerned about the economy of the area, but also about the environment.

Does that sound all right?

Thank you.

000090 VIRGINIA LEPPER: My name is Virginia Lepper. I've lived in Dade County since 1944, and I have a very strong interest in protecting the environment in this area. I think it's a beautiful place like no other in this country, and I think it would be a mistake to lose the beauty of the Everglades and Biscayne National Park, when we've invested a lot of money in the parks and we promised a lot of money to preserve the Everglades.

I am much opposed to an airport -- a bustling airport in the Homestead area, because I think there is no way anything can be done to keep it from being a blot on the landscape.

When you look at Miami Airport, and see the development surrounding it, there is no way it can possibly fit in with two national parks, that we want to keep in their pristine condition for future tourist trade and for our children and our grandchildren.

The present administration has been doing a lot on the ecology field and has dedicated a number of

millions of acres to park land, and I just don't think that we should allow those two national parks to be destroyed by building an airport with lots of pollution right in the very middle of it.

I know people in Homestead are anxious for jobs, but with the employment rate as high as it is at this point, I fail to see how people in Homestead can't get jobs some place else if necessary. I mean, lots of people move for employment purposes and certainly they can do the same thing.

000091 SANDRA TAKESHITA: My name is Sandra Takeshita, T-A-K-E-S-H-I-T-A. I am here because I do not feel that a full major expansion of Homestead Air Force Base property into a larger commercial airport is a good idea for the area. I think that redevelopment can go in many other directions that would favor parks and a good family life in the area to co-exist along with it.

The Hoover/Collier development plan, I don't know a lot about it, but it is looking better to me than a major expansion of the airport.

Homestead Air Force Preserve is fine. I don't have any problem with continuing the reserve base.

The economy of the area has come back from

Hurricane Andrew, but development of the property would be good for the area and encourage people to move in and it would provide a lot of jobs, but I think we don't need to rush into an airport alone. I think we need to look at alternatives such as the aquarium and more family oriented sites and activities.

The parks are too valuable to let them become placed in jeopardy with the type of activities that go on in support of an airport, and I am not at all certain that people who currently use MIA would even be in favor of going that far and moving their services. I am here at the meeting partly to become more familiar with the alternatives, but I definitely do not favor a major expansion for airport uses.

Thank you.

000092 STEPHEN HALPERT: My name is Stephen Halpert. I am a physician at the University of Miami, and I am also a recent graduate as of December with an MBA at the University of Miami. I have kind of a foot in both areas, as far as science and also in the business world.

I certainly understand the concern of the people in the south end of the County about ways to develop an economic base, but I do not believe that

the way to go is with an airport, that is going to bring a great deal of pollution, noise, sound. I guess that's the same thing.

Biological contaminants in the air and things that float to the ground and get in the water and the little algae and everything gets bad. The food chain starts to deteriorate. This already happened in Biscayne Bay and this can only worsen it.

I think the study is flawed, the statement that it would take groundwater years to be affected by the contaminants from the airport in our area. They will happen much more rapidly, even in terms of weeks, which is what the local scientists say.

The other data is based on areas that don't have the same very open drainage from the surface water to the groundwater.

I really would like the proposals of the Collier and Hoover people to come in with an eco-environmental study, with aquarium research science and marine science and with a lot of the input from the marine science people as well as any other groups like that.

I think that brings in a similar number of jobs. Hopefully more people would come in for more visits and spend time and learn about this type of

environment. I think it's the kind of thing that our community needs to help boost our morale and our self image.

I am very concerned about maintaining the more natural aspect of how water flows from the Everglades into the bay and this would be consistent with the Army Corps' overall plan to bring back the more historical type of water flow in that area, and I think that putting an airport this close to Biscayne National Park would be a very negative attempt to develop that kind of process.

I am also concerned about the effects on proposed ideas to increase the amount of wetlands in that area and I think that the airport would have a much greater effect than the mixed use plans proposed by the Collier and Hoover people.

I am very concerned with the possibility that if the land does get placed for mixed use, that the determination of how this land would be developed would be up to the Miami-Dade County commission which has done a rather disgusting job over the years in dealing with some types of logical and intelligent plans for our County.

This deeding of the land from the Air Force to the Department of Interior and given to the Collier

family in exchange for the gas and all rights, would enable a group to oversee the development of this area, so it will become a model rather than a discussing corrupted plan or lack of plan of development which we have in most of our County.

So I certainly support the mixed use alternative.

000093 CYNTHIA COWEN: My name is Cynthia Cowen. I am chairperson for the local chapter of the Miami Chapter of Save Earth. That's an international environmental organization. My feeling is that I would not like to see the Air Force base not developed into an airport.

My reasons are: I think it would compromise the ecology in the area and I feel that at a certain point, with the number of people that live in this geographic area, there has to be a reasonable amount of development. I feel over-development is the rule at this point, and there could be better uses for that area.

For instance, I would like to see the land preserved as land, and whatever goes in there not to compromise the quality of the life forms that are in the area.

That's it.

000094 DAMARIE QUINTANA: My name is Damarie Quintana. I live in Southwest Miami. I am for the airport. We need the jobs. Studies have been made that say it won't harm the environment.

I feel this -- there are a lot of different things. One thing is being a racial thing. President Clinton, Vice President Gore promised us this years ago and now they are backing out on this.

I'd like to quote on something on the debate Al Gore had in New Hampshire on January 26 with Bill Bradley.

The question to him was: Mr. Gore, can you outline your specific vision of the White Mountain National Forest for our people here in New Hampshire, who count on it for business and recreation?

Vice President Gore answer's was: We should respect and continue the process of local input to take into account the uniqueness in the White Mountain National Forest. And as we protect the wilderness area, that same local input will be a part of the process.

He states right there that he will take input, and from the looks of it, he is not.

That is all I have to say.

We need the jobs and we are not going to

harm the environment.

Thank you.

000095 KEN SOMMER: My name is Ken Sommer. I live at 8535 Southwest 112 Street in Miami. I think it's very important to retain the undeveloped character of this parcel of land to use it for agricultural or residential areas.

This national park is important. It is a wildlife area, and we need to learn from our history, both with the Homestead Air Force Base and with Richmond Field, both of which were devastated by hurricanes. This area is subject to destruction by hurricanes. That almost anything that's built there will be ultimately destroyed, except for agriculture or recreational uses.

That's it. Thank you.

(Thereupon, the following proceedings were held at the public meeting.)

COLONEL McSHANE: I'd like to have everybody take a seat so we can go ahead and get started now.

I have a couple of administrative announcements. If you have any signs or banners that you took along with you to your seats, please do not hold them up and block anybody else's view.

Something I learned from last night, I

request that anybody who has a cell phone, please turn the ringer off. That was a little bit distracting last night to have all the phones ringing all night long. Put it on vibrate mode or voice mail mode or whatever it takes, and you can deal with it later.

One other thing you should know at this point is that this session will be ending at 4:30 today, so that we have a little time between this session and the open house which will start at 5:30 and the evening hearing which will start at 7:00 p.m. I just didn't want you to be surprised when I stopped at 4:30 this afternoon.

Welcome to this public hearing on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on the Disposal of Portions of the Former Homestead Air Force Base. I am Colonel Mike McShane. I am the Chief Trial Judge of the Air Force, stationed at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, DC. My normal duties include presiding over Air Force courts-martial. But this week I've been made available to preside over this series of five hearings which are being held in this area concerning the disposal and subsequent reuse of former Homestead Air Force base property.

I have not been involved in the development of any of the proposals that are being considered. My

job is just to make sure that we have a fair and orderly hearing today.

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to come here today for this public hearing. If you were interested, I hope you took time to visit with the technical staff prior to this portion of the hearing.

In preparing this Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, or Draft SEIS, as we'll be calling it all afternoon -- it was the Air Force's goal to understand the environmental implications of deciding for what purpose and to whom to convey surplus property at former Homestead Air Force Base. The Draft SEIS examines reasonable ways in which the property might be developed, used, and the reasonably foreseeable environmental consequences of the alternatives.

At this time I'd like to introduce Major Mike Chipley of the Air Force Executive Issues Team. He's an engineer by trade, with a Ph.D. in civil engineering from the University of Colorado. Major Chipley will discuss the proposed action and alternatives, and provide a short synopsis of the reuse issues.

Since the overall purpose of these hearings

to obtain input from you on the contents of the Draft SEIS, the presentation will be short.

Major Chipley.

MAJOR CHIPLEY: Thank you, Colonel McShane. I too would like to extend my thanks to all of you for taking time to provide your comments on the Draft SEIS.

For the past several years we have been engaged in the process of completing the realignment and reuse of former Homestead Air Force Base as required by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act.

The Air Force's primary goal in this process is to transfer the properties in a manner that supports local plans for economic revitalization of South Florida and protects Biscayne Bay and the nearby national parks. A disposal must also be compatible with continuing the existing military and law enforcement missions.

The Air Force and Federal Aviation Administration, or FAA, are the designated Lead Agencies for the Draft SEIS.

The Air Force has decision-making responsibilities for the transfer of the property.

The FAA has decision-making responsibilities

for airport facilities.

There are three Cooperating Agencies.

One cooperating agency is the National Park Service, because it manages Biscayne National Park, and Everglades National Park.

Another cooperating agency is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service because of its responsibilities to ensure threatened and endangered species are adequately considered and because of the proximity of Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

The third cooperating agency is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency because of its regulatory responsibilities.

The contractor hired by the Air Force to actually conduct the analysis is Science Applications International Corporation, or SAIC for short. They've been supported by another contractor, Landrum and Brown, which performed airport planning and noise analysis.

I would like to take a couple of minutes to update you on the SEIS process and what has occurred since the scoping period ended in July of 1998. More than four hundred forty individuals, organizations, and agencies provided written input during our one hundred thirty-two day scoping period, and one hundred

ninety-five people spoke at public scoping meetings. The size and complexity of the Draft SEIS has grown substantially because of the number and diverse nature of issues and many federal agencies, state and local governments, private organizations, and concerned citizens involved. Midway through the analysis, two mixed use proposals were received which were incorporated into the analysis.

We recognize this has been a long process for everyone. We want you to know many other communities have also struggled through the base closure process. Some former bases have been developed for aviation uses, others for non-aviation uses. The success of redevelopment depends upon the local community's involvement and support.

The Draft SEIS examines a number of reuse alternatives for remaining surplus property at the former base. Ongoing reuse involving property that has already been transferred, like the Job Corps Center, the Dade County Homeless Trust, the regional park, and other deeded properties, would continue under any of the alternatives.

The alternatives underwent thorough and complex analysis of the environmental and economic impacts that could potentially occur as a result of

redevelopment. Fourteen topics were used as the basis for the analysis. Public and agency concerns that were expressed at our scoping meetings identified important issues and helped focus our analysis. Those concerns have been incorporated throughout the Draft SEIS.

When the reuse process was initiated for Homestead Air Force Base, Miami-Dade County was designated as the Local Reuse Authority to develop a reuse plan for the former base.

The County has proposed that the one thousand six hundred thirty-two acres of remaining surplus property at former Homestead Air Force Base be transferred to Miami-Dade County Aviation Department for development of a commercial airport.

This is the Proposed Action addressed in the Draft SEIS. The analysis of the Proposed Action includes identifying and assessing new flight tracks that would be used at the commercial airport.

Airport operations, in general, are characteristically different than commercial or residential land uses in the types and numbers of vehicles, equipment and people, and the resulting impacts to the environment. The main issues of the proposed action involve air pollution, stormwater

runoff and noise levels.

Another alternative examined in the Draft SEIS is a Commercial Spaceport. The main issues with the commercial spaceport alternative involve the uncertainties related to the licensing process, safety and potential increase in noise.

Three approaches were examined for non-aviation uses, presented as the Mixed Use Alternative.

Market driven development.

The Collier Resources Company proposal and the Hoover Environmental Group Plan.

The Mixed Use alternatives could create higher intensity of use in a shorter period of time but may have less environmental effects on the national parks.

The Draft SEIS also includes the No Action alternative, which means the property continues to belong to the government and reverts to caretaker status. Under each alternative, the Air Force, Florida Air National Guard and Customs Service continue to use the runway for their current military and law enforcement missions.

The Draft SEIS addresses each alternative in the context of future growth in South Florida and also

takes into account potential cumulative impacts of other projects. It also includes some historical information where available.

Your views and comments on the Draft SEIS will be important as we work toward completing the Final SEIS. We are now about half way through the sixty day public comment period. We scheduled these hearings to provide you an opportunity to review the Draft SEIS and formulate comments you can give here today, and also to provide some time after these hearings so you can incorporate things you might learn here today into written comments. Whether you choose to comment today or to provide your comments in writing between now and March 7, we look forward to receiving your input and assisting us in completing the final document.

The Final SEIS, scheduled for completion in July 2000, will include comments made at the public hearings or submitted in writing during the public comment period for the Draft SEIS, along with Air Force and FAA responses to your comments.

A decision on what action will be taken concerning the transfer of the disposal property will be made no earlier than thirty days after publication of the Final SEIS.

We will continue to distribute news releases and send newsletters to those on our mailing list throughout the final course of the SEIS process. Anyone wishing to be added to the mailing list should complete an attendance card located at the registration table and check the appropriate box on the card.

In summary, I'd like to say that we do understand that this is a complicated and often frustrating process. Let me reiterate that neither the Air Force nor FAA proposes direct development the surplus property.

The Air Force's goal is to transfer the land in a manner that supports local plans for economic revitalization and protects Biscayne Bay and the nearby national parks.

A disposal must also be compatible with continuing the existing military and law enforcement missions.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you, Major Chipley.

We offered each of the proponents of an alternative an opportunity to describe their proposal and speak about it. Miami-Dade County representatives have been given up to ten minutes to speak about their proposal.

You may also have noticed that some of the other proponents, although they've elected not to give a presentation, have materials available at tables at the back of the room.

I understand we have here today Bill Johnson, the Assistant City Manager, and Gary Dellapa, the Aviation Director from Miami-Dade County, and they have less than ten minutes to talk about their proposal.

Proceed.

GARY DELLAPA: Thank you.

Good afternoon. My name is Gary Dellapa. I am the Aviation Director for Miami-Dade County. We operate Miami International Airport and five general aviation airports. I'd like to thank you for giving us again the opportunity to present our department's recommendation for redevelopment of the former Air Force base.

It is important for this panel to bear in mind that the airnautical capacity issue that I am addressing today is not just South Dade's issue, not just a Miami-Dade County issue, but issues of great concern to all of South Florida.

You've heard previous testimony from our Mayor and other elected officials on what the decision

on reuse means to continue prosperity for this region. History is on the side of aviation.

The South Florida community has a longstanding and pre-eminent position in the aviation world, dating back to the first airline terminal in the United States in 1928 and continuing through the tremendous growth of tourism and foreign trade.

This community has come to rely on the aviation industry as the chief provider of jobs.

All is not well, however. The current system of airport is taxed to the extreme of its limit and will prove unable to meet future demands unless helped by a new facility.

In the rear of the auditorium the airport has a display on future airport demands and our capacity to meet the demands. It is imperative that you understand that our inability to meet market driven demands means a loss of economic activity and serious impact on our employment base and business community. You may be aware of our efforts to accelerate a fourth runway at Miami International. This project is the single most important element of our department's long range development program. However, this final incremental gain in capacity will not be able to meet the air traffic forecast for

beyond 2015.

For our facility to meet both near and long term demands, a critical element of this plan is to perceive the flexibility to be able to react to future market conditions that may be unforseen today, such as a free Cuba, the growth of E-commerce or the success of the Free Trade of the Americas.

Miami-Dade's most limiting capacity constraints today is the number of full service commercial carrier runways available in our airport system to safely manage air traffic forecast levels.

Miami International is quickly reaching saturation, to the point where no additional runway or additional capacity can be provide. Numerous efforts in the last three decades to identify new sites in South Florida for commercial aviation facilities have proved fruitless. There is no other site. There isn't even another site.

Consequently, the most crucial issue confronting us today is the decision on the ultimate reuse plan. That decision will affect whether or not this community will be able to accommodate the tremendous growth and is unable to meet it with MIA and other airports alone.

For example, as reported in the SEIS,

Opa-Locka is crowded with air space and environmental issues, and from an aviation point of view the conclusion is inescapable. We need Homestead. However, the need for identifying long term capacity demands will not come at the expense of environmental compatibility.

One of the Miami-Dade Aviation Department's stated system plan and objective is to provide an aviation facility to meet demand while ensuring a balance between environmental issues and economic opportunity for our residents.

The SEIS indicates that there will be no unacceptable environmental impact associated with the commercial airport development alternative. In contrast, noise impact from commercial airports are found to be less intrusive than those resulting from the military's presence.

Miami-Dade County is committed to ensuring that the plan and development of the commercial airport alternative is implemented in an environmentally compatible manner. This is not just words or hollow promises. It is Miami-Dade County's substantial track record of environmental responses. We have spent over one hundred seventy million dollars since 1994 to address environmental issues. Our

current five million dollar construction program is built around maintaining the environmental quality of not only the airport, but the surrounding communities as well.

These are very real and tangible attestment to our commitment. Under the leadership of Major Penelas and the county manager, no one should fear implementation of the airport alternative.

Miami-Dade proposed in the SEIS the projected flight operations provided for future demand. We believe that the airport is the most compatible. Furthermore, advances in airplane and engine technology should offset the engine frenzy of commercial flight into conversion to Stage Three engines on all aircrafts. This change came about January 1st this year.

Another example of this type of technology change is increase use of a quiet regional fleet. We are at a crossroads as to the future of aviation in South Florida. This is our only opportunity to preserve a badly needed airport to the regional airport system and come to allow this community aviation industry to grow and prosper.

COLONEL McSHANE: I understand Mr. Rasco is going to use the remaining four or so minutes.

RAMON RASCO: Thank you. My name is Ramon Rasco, representing the developer selected by the County in the process leading to the execution of the lease. I am here to confirm on the record once again that the developer is committed to building an enviromentally safe airport.

The developer's commitment was spelled out in Chapter 288, that started in Miami-Dade County, that was approved by the entire county commission, that resulted in a park being dedicated to this community -- to the South Dade community, that went to Palm Beach and received approval from the South Florida Water Management District.

It was reviewed and approved by the Department of Community Affairs in Tallahassee and received the unanimous approval of Lawton Chiles and his cabinet sitting as Florida Administrative Commission in 1998.

This is in fact in contrast to the Collier Hoover plan which has not been reviewed by a single one of these governmental bodies or agencies. All of the environmental safeguards that have been built into this project through the 288 process have been agreed to by the developer, by my client, and today the developer hereby reaffirms his commitment to those

safeguards and building an airport that will be compatible with our environment, with our community and our national parks.

This project brings tremendous economic development opportunities to the entire Miami-Dade County and provides, as Aviation Director Dellapa has said, the necessary airport capacity for our air transportation system, in order for Miami-Dade County to remain at the forefront of international trade and commerce well into the 21st century.

Let me talk about the lease for a minute. Even our harsher critics have agreed this is a fair lease. The lease was awarded and was signed after numerous public hearings and intense public scrutiny, again, in fact in contrast to the Collier-Hoover plan which has not been subjected to any public hearing in Dade County.

The lease represents millions of dollars of revenue to Dade County. It is a public asset. The airport is a public asset and the lease will provide millions of dollars in revenues to this community. The lease will provide for the developer to build state-of-the-art facilities for E-commerce, for aircraft maintenance and repair in our community and many other facilities, that will provide good high

paying jobs for our community, our children and our grandchildren.

The developer is committed to making this project a win-win situation, with a high-tech enviromentally safe airport that will be developed with the appropriate mitigation measures implemented as the project is built out, in order to prevent any damage to our national parks or to our environment.

In closing, the County's plan presents us an opportunity and responsibility. It is a tremendous opportunity for good jobs, for economic development and air transportation for our community and it balances it with the responsibility of caring for our environment, caring for our parks and caring for our communities.

For these reasons we urge the Air Force and its cooperating agencies, including SAIC, to dispose of this surplus property pursuant to the proposed action as spelled out in the Draft SEIS.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Was that it for the presentations?

With thirty seconds, Bill Johnson, Sr., Assistant to County Manager Merrett Steirheim.

BILL JOHNSON: I have prepared remarks, but

with thirty seconds, instead of reading the remarks, let me emphasize the county administration's perspective for this air field is extremely important. It is essential that by the year 2015 we have additional air capacity, not just for Miami-Dade County, but for all of South Florida, so we can continue to grow.

Again, my last remarks will be that this community has over ten million visitors a year. Ninety-five percent of those visitors come by air. Air travel is essential to the health of our community, again not just Miami-Dade County, but all of South Florida.

We believe that this airport can be done in a very safe enviromentally sensitive way. We urge you to support it, if you will, and to allow Miami-Dade County to move forward to utilize this as a reliever airport.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you.

This concludes the presentations of information about the proposals. In a few minutes we will begin the public comment portion of this hearing.

You'll have several ways to provide your comments. If you have brought written comments,

please place them in the box that's available for receiving your comments. Written comments carry the same weight as oral comments which are presented at this hearing. If you want to write down your comments while you are here, there are forms at the table outside where you can fill them out and leave them. You can also take the form with you back to your homes to complete and then mail it back to the address provided on the comment form. You can also write up your comments in your own format and mail them in. You do not need to use the comment forms. They were only prepared for your convenience.

You will have the opportunity to provide oral comments when I begin the public comment portion of the hearing. Let me tell you a few things about the public comment period today. Last night we had a big crowd and not everyone was able to speak before we stopped at 11:45 p.m. We will start today with those that we did not get to last night. After that we'll move on to any elected officials that have indicated they want to speak today, and after that we'll hear from those of you who have submitted cards today indicating that you wish to speak. We will call you in the order that the cards were submitted, with one caveat. If you did speak last night and you submitted

another card today, we'll put you at the end of the list for today.

Anyone who has not yet filled out a card and wants to speak will be given an opportunity to do so after all the registered speakers have made their comments. Each individual or organization will have three minutes to provide comments. You may finish your sentence when your time is up, but please stop promptly so that we can hear from the maximum number of people.

I remind you that boos and clapping take away time from the speaker's time. So please respect other's view points and let them make their comments without interruption.

When you do come up to the microphones there in the aisle, I would ask that you please clearly state your name and the name of any organization that you might be representing.

The transcript will be a permanent record of this hearing and will be published in the final SEIS. Please do not provide any personal information in your comments if you don't want to see it published in the final SEIS.

It is very important that you use the microphones that we have there so that the reporter

can hear you and get your comments down for the record.

The focus of this hearing portion is to listen to your comments regarding the contents of the Draft SEIS and I remind you that it's not appropriate to engage in personal attacks on one another or comment on someone else's earlier comments. That doesn't get you anywhere and it isn't commenting on the environmental impact as this hearing is designed to receive.

Preceding this presentation you had an opportunity to ask questions one-on-one of the technical staff, and, hopefully, all your questions were answered. Any further questions asked in the course of making your statements will be addressed in the final SEIS rather than answering today. Please focus your comments on the Draft SEIS and the analysis of the reuse options.

If you need to have your comments translated into English and did not so indicate when you signed in, please let me know when you are called up. If you make comments today and later decide you have additional comments or know someone who is interested in the comment process, but is unable to attend any of the meetings, written comments can be submitted until

March 7, 2000. The mailing address can be found on all of the available handouts.

At this point I am going to start out by calling on last night's attendees who we did not get to, and I've told several folks who did come up here and asked, I am doing that at this hearing and I am doing it again tonight. If people did not make it to the afternoon session, but are able to attend tonight, I will start out this portion of the hearing by calling on those folks who didn't get here this afternoon to make statements.

000096 DON CHINQUINA: My name is Don Chinquina. I commend Katie Sorenson for standing up last night as the only public official against the airport and in favor of the mixed use alternative. I thought that was very, very right.

I also want to thank Commissioner Dennis Moss and Representative Ballard for their thoughts of deliberation. Their environmental record is only exceeded by their personal integrity. I know they are going to come up with the right solution, and this is important to know because these folks come from South Dade County, in fact, in contrast to the mayors that you heard from the north end of the county.

I heard a lot about jobs last night and

family issues, and I was disconcerted and it was slightly disengenous when I read the Miami Herald article about Homestead and how we are rebounding down here in South Dade. We are in a slow, steady upswing and it's accelerating, and the Herald reports that the employment in Homestead is less than Dade County.

Having said that, no matter how good your economy is, you want it to get better. That's why you want the jobs.

The realistic issue, I have to tell you, there is only one way to go. That's the mixed use alternative. We are prepared to take this thing into a protracted legal battle. There is going to be one lawsuit in federal and two in state court. We'll tie it up for seven years with lawsuits. We just started in this thing.

If jobs is what you want, you need to find that economic engine that's going to get up there, and when one window opens and another closes, and that open window is the mixed use alternative. Think about it. The environmentalists are going to fight this thing to death.

On the other side, the opponents of the County plan are in favor of the mixed use alternative.

The Miami Herald, Katie Sorenson, the

National Park Services have all come out in favor of the mixed use alternative. Secretary of Interior, Bruce Babbet, himself has said the airport will destroy the national parks or degrade the national parks and he's in favor of the mixed use alternative.

You don't need to be a political science major to figure out, if your opponents who are opposing the airport are lining up behind the other economic engine, which is going to be the quickest way to go.

I want to address one criticism that's been thrown around. They said we have not supported or endorsed the Collier plan. I am the man that brought Lisa Hoover to the Collier plan. I did it because I needed an environmentalist there. Her dad is the founder of Biscayne National Park and I trust they will represent our interests there.

Having said that, there are things that we need to learn about the Collier/Hoover plan. We are doing everything we can to facilitate that plan and come up with an environmentally sensitive solution. So don't think we are not excited as an alternative.

Thank you.

000097 DR. MARTIN MOTES: I am Dr. Martin Motes. I am a member of the Redland Professional Growers

Association, which I am not speaking on behalf of, but I'd like to point out that Redland Professional Growers, we sponsor a festival which brings thousands of tourists to South Dade each and every year, and is exemplary of the type of environmentally safe tourism that is being developed in South Dade now.

We are closing the possibility of a beautiful flower that is just starting to open in South Dade, that will utilize the unique tropical ambient of South Florida as a unique tourist resource with ongoing value to the community.

Speaking also on behalf of the agriculture community, I feel there has been improper -- not enough importance has been give to the impact on the agriculture community in the proposed development of Homestead Air Force base.

In discussions with the staff of the SEIS, I brought up the question of whether or not the impact of the proposed thirty-five, thirty-seven thousand jobs -- but wherever these jobs come from, only someone naive would think up to a thousand of those jobs would be created in South Dade and the remainder of those people will come from outside the region.

We are talking about the regional impact of thirty five thousand additional homes, with the

additional strain of all resources probably to the tune of twenty-five thousand dollars each in tax payers outlay. The cost of this proposal will be in the range of nine hundred million dollars to the tax payers and that does not count the agriculture land that will be taken out of production to the tune of perhaps fifteen thousand acres to accommodate these additional people with the additional congestion, the impact in the entire region. The infrastructure has not been developed for this. I think this issue should be addressed and has not yet been.

I would also like to point out that the quality of life of the entire region, as an agricultural community, will be disrupted by this airport. A flight every five minutes makes it impossible to conduct a reasonable conversation in much of the Homestead area, and it also is in the midst of a flight path which carries it through the Channel 6 tower which is within one mile of the community's elementary and secondary school.

The potential for an accident is immense.

Finally, I'd like to say thank you for allowing us the opportunity to speak here. The process was being highjacked. Thank you for giving it back to the people and taking it away from those

people who have highjacked this in the beginning.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Lloyd Brown.

000098 LLOYD BROWN: Good morning. My name is Lloyd Brown. I am Director of the Wildlife Rescue in Dade County. I want to mention a few topics that have been badly misrepresented.

First is that the environmentalists that are opposed to the commercial airport are not from this area. I don't think there is any family in the area that has more history than mine, with the exception of the fourteen years I spent as a paratrooper in the US Army, and while I fought in two wars.

Everybody here has a right to have their opinions heard. I have the additional privilege of having earned mine.

I am very much from this area. I am opposed to a commercial airport being developed here. I've heard a lot of crazy numbers about the unemployment statistics in Homestead. I don't know where they got the numbers, but have the Labor Bureau statistics that state the highest unemployment in Homestead occurred 1992. In the seven months prior to Hurricanes Andrew unemployment in the Homestead area was 10.3 percent as an average.

The most recent month that we have statistics for is November of 1999. Unemployment in November of '99 was down to five point five percent in the Homestead and Florida City areas. It's almost half of what it was in 1992.

October of 1999 unemployment in Homestead, Florida City area was 5.4 percent. That's the lowest it has been in the past ten years.

The unemployment rate that this airport is supposed to reduce does not exist.

I worked on a construction crew at the Homestead Motor Speedway. I was one of only two workers on the whole crew that was from this area. Everybody else came from Texas, Kansas, North Carolina or Mexico.

Those are the types of jobs that are going to come in with the commercial airport. They are not going to be hiring from this community as everybody seems to think.

Someone last night said they would rather see a plane crash in the Everglades than downtown Hialeah and Opa-Locka. As an environmentalist, it would be better for a plane to crash out in the Everglades. The environmental damage would be minimal and we can overcome it.

How would that person feel about a 747 or 124 crashing into Turkey Point Nuclear Power Plant?

I'll quote Edward Abby, "Growth for the sake of growth is the philosophy of the cancer cell."

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Kenneth Cassel.

000099 KENNETH CASSEL: Good morning. I am assistant city manager for the City of Homestead. Any time you enter an area where a decision has an impact on a significant number of people of the community, you have a significant number of diverse positions as to the correct decision.

I applaud the department of the Air Force for the effort to address all the alternatives in the the SEIS. I believe the SEIS covers the concerns in a format that allows a development that does not present a significant adverse impact to surrounding communities.

It is abundantly clear that Miami-Dade County is lacking in jobs and future growth. The county-wide average, according to the SEIS, is 1.4 jobs per household in South Dade. South of Eureka Drive is .8.

Of the alternatives, the only one that presents a plan that would close that gap is the

proposed action that's identified in the SEIS.

The City of Homestead's Council has passed a resolution to support the proposed action. We thank you for your efforts to advance a serious, unbiased document to the public and for our comments.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Paul Mulhern.

000100 PAUL MULHERN: I am a resident of Goulds, Florida. Definitely citizens here are tired and economically starved. I remember when this proposal first came about and many other companies and organizations were interested in Homestead Air Force Base, and Dade County commissioners, in their wisdom, decided not to open the bid process.

I can't believe what I hear many of the mayors from northern territories and some representatives of Dade County saying, that they have a good environmental track record.

This County overall, out of any city in America, has less than a one percent track record. I am feeling outrage as we felt when we first heard about the HABDI deal. It was totally ignored.

Public hearings were scheduled. One of them was at Mays Middle School, where HABDI got up and walked out on the citizens that were there to ask

questions or even find out what their plan was.

Yes, everybody is so economically afraid of the base at this point that they are allowed to go on with any plan that says we can move forward. However, many studies and economic plans have been discussed, many studies have been done about this area, specifically about tourism. In none of those studies has there ever been implemented a cohesive, sustainable plan to really showcase that we are in-between two national parks.

The logging industry is devastated. You drive down Krome Avenue and you see signs in paradise of twenty-seven dollars a night and truckers are welcomed. You go to the Keys and you see signs that says two hundred dollars a night, and you go to Miami Beach and you pay two hundred dollars a night, and here we are, in-between, with the wisdom of our city council and our county commissioners, with the exception of Commissioner Katie Sorenson, who is the only one that came out against this plan, and she's the one that spent the most time talking to the most constituents of her community.

Dennis Moss and Larcenia Bullard are always open to their public, and we live here and we do not want a cargo airport. This is not going to be a

commercial airport. This will be a dirty cargo facility.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Steve Golnick.

Margi Buster.

000101 MARGI BUSTER: My name is Margi Buster. I am a native and resident of Homestead. I also am co-owner of two commercial businesses for over twenty years. I belong to a approximately twenty non-for-profit organizations, most of them locally. I am very active in my community, and today I am not representing any of those organizations, but I request that you give my personal choice your most serious consideration.

I choose more money for all communities surrounding Homestead Air Force Base. South Dade does need some economic infusion, and yes that includes jobs. I don't have any statistics, but it sounds like everybody does.

We need to balance those jobs for both agricultural and environmental areas. We are climately unique and are both home to extraordinary diverse humans, plants and animals.

This area must become better than ever, which was our slogan after Hurricane Andrew. We owe

that to ourselves and we owe that to the thousands and thousands of people who so generously reached out to us in our time of need after Hurricane Andrew.

That seems to be something that the community rapidly forgets, while we go lewd in our self-pity.

I personally am appalled at how many of your local elected officials were involved at last night's meeting, to block out the very residents that your panel is here to collect input from.

Not for one moment do I believe that a cargo airport will have the same value or integrity to South Dade as Homestead Air Force Base once did. I cannot envision international visitors or middle class residents flocking to visit or moving next door to a cargo airport, nor do I think that a cargo airport is the same as the Homestead Recreational Airport.

I am not so naive to think that a cargo airport will not cost the tax payers infrastructure money. Therefore, I request that you recommend that the alternative Collier/Hoover plan be looked at very closely, realizing that the majority of residents will enjoy a better quality of life, while reducing the impact on the agriculture and environmental area. That would create harmony.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Jose Ray Romero.

000102 JOSE RAY ROMERO: Good evening. My name is Jose Raymond Romero. I live at 1850 Flamingo Court, Homestead. I am here to say that when George Bush came to town, he said personally that he was going to help rebuild the town as much as possible. I happen to meet him personally and shake his hand.

Clinton said he was going to do his best for the town. We are waiting seven years and we haven't had anything done yet.

In reference to Homestead, I live in Homestead and I have lived in Dade County for thirty-five years. Homestead Plaza, which is the biggest shopping center that we have, half of the shopping center is empty. Most of the businesses have gone out, because there is not enough business.

I also live in Village of Homestead. There is a shopping center like three blocks from my house. Out of the eighteen businesses that were there before Andrew, sixteen have closed down. There are only two.

So we definitely have a problem here. We've asked our mayor and our commission to help us out. The mayor and six commissioners, they are all in favor of the Homestead Air Force Base, because its going to

provide jobs.

In Panama, when they closed the base, they didn't want to come to Homestead, because we don't have a movie theater. Before Andrew we had two movie theaters. We haven't put one back, because too many people want to invest money.

The Old Fashioned Brickell Lumber was there sixty years. They closed down. Ace Lumber, the Redlands, Homestead Electric, a lot of businesses have been closing.

Yes, we do have a few jobs. Like they say, Wall-Mart. Yes, I have a friend that works there. They only give him thirty hours and all he makes is five or six dollars an hour. He has his wife unemployed. He has two kids. That's not a way to make a living.

Most of the mayors in Dade County also are for the plan, for the airport. We need it badly. We are trying to have it there as soon as possible. We need jobs and we need high paying jobs, not five dollars an hour or six dollars an hour.

The hospital also is having problems. It is losing money, because there are not too many jobs to create, you know. So we also have problems.

All the contractors in Homestead, they have

to work in Broward County -- the majority -- because there is no work in here.

Thank you, and have a nice day.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you.

Let me remind my earlier announcement. I think I heard eight cell phones. Please, folks, that's rude. Put them on vibrate or put them on voice mail and pick up your messages later. I know you all are important, but someone else can wait a couple of minutes.

Adam Redford.

000103 ADAM REDFORD: My name is Adam Redford. I am with the Sierra Club League. In lieu of actually speaking here, I am going to show a video tape. They say that a picture is worth a thousand words, and if you can roll the tape, we can look at two areas that are in question, Biscayne National Park and a body of water just off the end of the runway by MIA.

(Thereupon, a video tape was played.)

ADAM REDFORD: Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Are you leaving that tape for attachment to the record?

ADAM REDFORD: Yes, I am.

COLONEL McSHANE: Curt Ivy.

000104 CURT IVY: Good afternoon. My name is Curt

Ivy. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my view with regards to this issue.

I have grown up in Dade County for forty-five years, been down here. I've lived in South Dade County my whole life. I currently reside in Homestead. I am currently employed by the City of Homestead. I've worked for them for almost thirteen years. I started as their police chief, became an assistant city manager, stayed there as assistant city manager for a couple of years and now I am the acting city manager.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak to everyone with regard to my position and in regard to the air base.

Homestead -- imagine, in Homestead it has been a very difficult. I can tell the difference between prior to 1992 and after 1992 in being involved in the management of the city. It's a very tough job. We are not in a designation as an environmental zone, because we are wealthy or because we have a lot of -- lot of people that are not unemployed.

When I looked at this issue, we are all concerned with, and now its become heated. We haven't had conversation hopefully about this for some time. With the 1998 Supplemental Environmental Impact

Statement coming together now and making the statement -- I am not an expert on this. I probably fall into the same category as most of us. I don't know about the environment. I don't work in the environment.

I enjoy the environment. I am not in the airport business. I don't know what makes an airport run. I am in the city government business, city management business, and I have to look at this using information that is available to me to read and to try to make my best decision to represent the city and my citizens.

There were three criterias I looked at. One, we want to maximize economic development. I know the difference between when the air base was at full capacity and when it was gone. We had the base closure in twenty-four hours, not a five year period. We appreciate the economic development that the air base brought to us. We appreciate it more now that it is not here, and sometimes that's not always prevalent in military communities.

We wanted to maximize economic development. Our goal was to maximize the environment, not to co-exist with the environment.

After reading the executive summary -- I

didn't read the whole fifteen hundred pages -- the executive summary of the SEIS, it appears to me that the development of Homestead Air Base as a reliever airport maximizes each of those opportunities according to the study from the city and that is why I support the development of the air base.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Heidi Kuchenbacker.

000105 HEIDI KUCHENBACKER: Can you hear me?

I am here today. I think you know my point of view wearing it. I've been outside. I am sure everyone has seen me. I am kind of hard to miss in a crowd, but I don't want to talk as an environmentalist. I want to talk as a person that has lived here all my life.

Homestead Air Force base brought my family here years ago. I've grown up in South Florida. I've lived and played on the base. I've lived and played on the parks. I've lived and played in South Dade. My family instilled in me the values to enjoy our national parks, to camp, to hike, to canoe, to kayak.

Hurricane Andrew blew my home away. I lived in the Keys. Have been there too. It blew my business away. I can talk to you about socioeconomic

impacts, can't I?

I don't want an airport to destroy my national park. I don't want an airport to destroy the water I kayak on. I don't want an airport to destroy the quiet that I run to for solis.

I've traveled. I've been in Europe. I've been all over this country. I've been to most of our national parks. We have a treasure here. People from around the world come to Everglades and Biscayne National Parks.

We talk about ten million visitors. What happens when we don't have parks anymore? How many of those ten million visitors will we have?

I've been in Homestead Air Force base in a storm. Stood in two feet of water.

Of course we want jobs here. Last year I worked with a group of people that brought twenty-five hundred jobs, not jobs, but small businesses. One of those people was at the hearing last night and didn't have an opportunity to speak. She is a stay at home mom working from her home. Commercial jets over her home will end her business.

Many of these businesses that we established in South Florida are in the Homestead area. You will destroy their businesses, of the twenty-five hundred

that we established.

We already talked about the no bid process. I heard people last night talking about: Why can't we do this quickly? That was Dade County's hand. They are the ones that didn't allow their people to discuss options that we had, Collier and Hoover and the other multi use plans.

We have MIA, a perfect example of corruption at work. Pick up the paper.

Lastly, when Mayor Penelas declared on Friday night that this was the year of Biscayne Bay, and then to have the audacity to come and speak for a commercial airport, to me that doesn't represent my city, and I ask the Air Force not to convey the property to Miami-Dade County and find an alternative use or a multi use alternative.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Walter Collier.

000106 WALTER COLLIER: Thank you, Judge.

I would like to do it a little different. I would like to turn around and face the people.

My name is Walter Collier. I've been in this community since 1943. I am not a native, as some of you claim to be. I have raised four sons, three that were pilots in the Air Force and one is who is a

basketball coach.

I have a lot of attachment to this community and I have a lot to share with you. It is a sad day when we worry about the environment and we worry about jobs and we don't worry about the community. We have a real, real need in this community to get together -- to be together and to work together.

Today I don't see the clapping and the hissing, not as it was last night, but let's look at what we can really do.

Homestead Air Base is a reserve base dedicated to the defense of this country. I have a personal stake down there. My son flies out of there.

I want to tell you something else. That base, if we elect not to operate a commercial airport, will be shot down. Everybody says it doesn't matter, it matters from a different standpoint.

We had last year a pilot shortage of approximately eighteen hundred pilots in this country. When the majority of the pilots get out, a lot of them -- I don't have the exact numbers -- go into the reserves, which this country cannot further develop, because we shutdown training bases, and environmentalists encouraged that.

I want to think about what we are trying to do in this community. We are trying to divide it. We've done a good job of that. The Air Force has got a tough decision to make. They have to make a decision on exactly what they recommend will be done.

The deck is stacked against those who wish to have the commercial airport developed, because you've got Vice President Gore who made the statement in Florida City that if he were elected, no aircraft will ever fly over Everglades National Park or Biscayne National Park. I don't know what he was smoking in that meeting. I am sure it was heavy, because airplanes fly over there at various altitudes, and they have for fifty-five years -- over fifty. Control it maybe, but eliminate it, never.

The Collier plan -- my name is Collier. I've been on the business end of a lot of jokes about the Collier plan and the Hoover plan. Katie Sorenson endorsed the plan.

I am a Collier. My family doesn't endorse it, in addition to eighty-seven thousand other people who I can't speak for.

What that plan does is very simple. It offers a golf course with a lot of caddies and offers a lot of employment at hotels for a lot of chamber

maids and a lot of janitors.

COLONEL McSHANE: Your time is up.

WALTER COLLIER: I am sorry. Thanks again. Let's get together as a community and let's try to work this problem out.

That base is going to stay here. Let's all help each other.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Mario Santizo.

000107 MARIO SANTIZO: Good afternoon. My name is Mario Santizo. I live in Homestead. I am against the building of the commercial airport in Homestead, because according to the SEIS Draft, on Page 36, it says that in the year 2015 there will be one hundred fifty thousand operations. That is four hundred eleven flights a day. That's one flight every two minutes.

Ninety percent of those operations will be at an average of one every two minutes, day and night. The other ten percent in this operation is every eight to twelve minutes from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

I am sure that before fifteen years that airport will be at maximum use. This will create loud noise, fuel and other pollutions in the clouds

polluting the air we breathe, our homes, our gardens, our cars, our neighborhoods and our water service and destroying the environment of the national parks and the wildlife living here, destroying the quiet, peaceful and healthy environment we now enjoy.

On Page 62 of the summary it says bird/aircraft strikes involving the F-16 aircrafts will occur once every three thousand three hundred operations. If this rate from F-16s were applied to the forecast civil aircraft operations at Homestead, an estimated forty-five bird/aircraft strikes could occur annually by 2015, increasing to about seventy strikes per year at maximum use.

"A serious aircraft accident is estimated to result from about 0.06 percent of bird strikes."

That means that in the year 2015 forty-five strikes a year, 0.06 percent, there is a possibility of 2.70 serious accidents a year. That is three serious accidents a year.

Maximum use, seventy strikes a year, by 0.06 percent, is 4.20 serious accidents per year.

I think the solution for this problem -- if one airplane strikes the nuclear plant, we are going to have a nuclear plant disaster not only in the State of Florida, but in neighboring states.

The solution for this problem for Miami Airport is to build an airport in Tamiami Airport. That will bring jobs for people, and the rich people from the builders and the bankers will make their money and everybody will be happy.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: That's all the cards from last night. I ran through the entire batch, and I'll set those aside.

I understand from the staffers here that there were no elected public officials or no one claiming to be an elected public official for this afternoon, so we can swing right into folks who signed up to speak today and who did not speak at a previous session.

Jacqueline Baumgartner.

000108 JACQUELINE BAUMGARTNER: Good afternoon everybody. My name is Jacqueline Baumgartner. I am a member of the Sierra Club, the National Park Conservation, the Wilderness Society and the Florida Zoological Society. I have lived here in South Dade since 1955.

When I first came, right away I went to the Everglades National Park and I was amazed at the number of birds that I saw. I have gone back to this

park every year, many, many times and now we see only about one tenth of the birds that I saw at that time.

I went to Biscayne National Park, and snorkeled also when it first opened, and I was amazed of all the fish I saw, and now I don't see as much anymore at all.

Now, you will say, what does that have to do with the airport? Well, I will tell you. If in all these years there has been such a decline, its because of pollution, because of the air and the water. With more air flights over this region, we will have even more pollution and more decline of the wildlife that we enjoy in this region.

I am not married. I don't have any children and no grandchildren, so I shouldn't care, because I don't have anybody to give it to, but if I am standing here now it is because of your children and your grandchildren. What are you going to leave them? All they are going to have is just a cargo airport.

Thank you for letting me speak.

COLONEL McSHANE: James Nall.

000109 JAMES NALL: I am a resident of South Dade for thirty-nine years. I enjoy the parks, the Everglades, since I was a child. I like Jacqueline have noticed and experienced the difference in the

Everglades. I take my children there all the time.

I think the politics need to be taken out of this. Al Gore, who is a true environmentalist, he'll hopefully be elected and save us from the Latin American Builders Association, whose whole goal is to asphalt Dade County, to destroy the quality of life we have enjoyed for so long.

I think it's all politics and we need to stand up and kick them out.

Alex Penelas and the county commission is full of cronies and the fact that we have allowed them to do so shows the kind of condition we are in. We should be ashamed of the County government, and the people in North Dade should spend more time in the parks or leave the State of Florida. It's a beautiful state, and we'd like to keep it that way.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Peter Baljet.

000110 PETER BALJET: Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Air Force, audience. I am Peter Baljet. I appear before you as a concerned citizen. I am the former director of the Florida State Department of Pollution Control and also the former director of the Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management.

I am here to support the redevelopment of Homestead Air Force Base, and I would like to clarify my position. I am pleased, first of all, that the Environmental Impact Statement disclosed that a commercial airport in Miami-Dade County will not adversely affect our environment, but I have to say that my recommendation would have been to proceed with the development.

I am basing that on the fact that for once we have the opportunity to create a desperately needed public project, incorporating the joint interests of many key disciplines of our society.

My tenure as a defender of air quality in Florida for a long, long time has been very tough. We will always be one step behind, and here, when the quality started to deteriorate, we created the Air Implementation Plan.

When the phosphates contaminated Dade County canals, we provided funds and created the Phosphates Deterrent Ordinance.

The phosphate mining -- (inaudible.)

COLONEL McSHANE: Let's hope that was all. If it persists, we'll take a break and track down the problem.

Sir, if you want to repeat that or take a

little more time, you certainly can do that.

PETER BALJET: The point that I was making --

COLONEL McSHANE: Let's just a take a short break. I find that it is a good time for a comfort break, if you will. Let's take about five minutes and then we'll come back and finish up.

(Short recess taken.)

COLONEL McSHANE: We are ready to proceed with our speaker.

PETER BALJET: I'll come right to the point. I have a written statement to enter in the record. I am just concerned, and I base it on my experience as a regulator and as a professional for many, many years, that a project of this nature, if we stop it today, it will certainly take place tomorrow, and that is because the population in Dade County is not going to stand still.

The pressure for this project years from now will be so great, that the same politicians that are here today saying "Stop the jobs," are going to be joining forces with development and industry to make this project happen. At what cost at that time? My prediction is that the environment will absolutely and surely take a great step backward.

So I call on the regulators of today and the

conservation organizations to join forces, look at this project and come up with an outcome that's acceptable to both the environment and the community.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Ginger Raspiller.

000111 GINGER RASPILLER: Thank you.

My name is Ginger Raspiller. I am a member of various organizations in the community, but I am here today because I care about the people in this community and our quality after life. I believe too many decisions on South Florida are being made by developers or politicians who are more concerned about their wealth and gain than they are about the community and quality of life for the people in this community.

As a community, we are -- are doing a great job. In the past week alone there have been two feature stories highlighting some of the problems with our parks. The New Times reported on the pitiful situation with the City of Miami parks. In the City inventory, they didn't even include their prime parks, Virginia Key and Bicentennial Park, because they are trying to develop it or sell them both. They mentioned a Dade County parking lot and even a cemetery as a park.

The few parks they have in the city are derelict and they are locked, unaccessible to the public.

In the Miami Herald the story talked about the lack of trees in the community is well below what most cities of this size in our nation have. It's not a surprise to any us of who live here. We've paved over much of our land already.

In spite of the sad state of many of our local parks in our community, we are very fortunate that we have not one, but two national parks and the Florida Keys Marine Sanctuary right in our doorstep. The Everglades is considered so ecologically significant that we are going to spend billions of dollars to restore it and protect it.

As a community we are going to help pay for that and well we should. As a community what will be our contribution to Biscayne and Everglades National Parks? That will be our legacy.

Do we want to be known as a community that built a major commercial airport next to two national parks? I don't think so. I know I don't.

The noise pollution, water pollution and air pollution will hurt the wildlife in their habitat and destroy the serenity of our national parks.

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Therefore, my opinion is that it just doesn't make sense. It's not appropriate. It's the wrong place for a large commercial airport.

Are we concerned about the good people in Homestead and their livelihood? Absolutely. Is the answer to their problems a mayor commercial airport next to Biscayne and Everglades National Parks? Absolutely not.

As a community we should be looking for pollution solutions that help the people of Homestead and preserve and protect our national parks and our quality of life. So I ask you not to develop this as a commercial air base.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you.

Next card I have is Margi Buster. She spoke already this morning. We'll pass on by.

Ken Swanberg.

000112 KEN SWANBERG: My name is Ken Swanberg. I am a member of the community here. I enjoy sailing on Biscayne Bay. I enjoy the serenity of the Everglades and Biscayne National parks. I would hate to lose that. Do not build an airport in Homestead.

The Air Force does not need to be an enabler to the developers and politicians in South Florida to help them screw up our environment and quality of

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life. Lord knows by what you see around us and what you read in the papers that they are doing a good enough job on their own.

I care about the people of Homestead. I ask that the Air Force, and I ask the powers that be to try to find another solution.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you.

Karsten Rist.

000113 KARSTEN RIST: My name is Karsten Rist. I am president of the Tropical Audobon Society, and I have problems with the SEIS.

My first problem is that the document focuses on one hundred operations and a maximum of twenty-one thousand flights a year which may be attained by the year 2015.

Presumably the new SEIS was created to allow us to make a meaningful decision as to whether an additional runway should be built and more flights should be taken off from Homestead.

The question is: Who are we kidding? There is an investment needed in the infrastructure required to get the two hundred thirty-one thousand flights going. Surely we are not very likely to then make a decision this is the wrong place to have an airport.

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If it were to happen that in 2015 the decision would go against additional flights out of Homestead, then that would show that we made the right decision in the first place meaning, now.

The obvious answer is that we should have a plan of more length than fifteen years, and the SEIS should address that question, because otherwise it cannot be the basis of a meaningful decision at this time.

My second concern relates to the lack of information on PAHs, and that's the gunk that we see when an airplane takes off in MIA. It is quite visible as you drive into town. It's the solids that remain of unburned fuel when the airplanes take off.

People who live under the flight path of MIA know that under certain conditions these PAHs settle down on their property and their cars that are parked outside, and under circumstances you can develop some medical conditions. If you live under the flight path of MIA, you can run you hand over the windshield of the car and you have black oily gunk on your fingers, and that is the PAHs.

The SEIS states that the value sources of PAH to concentration settlement is not known. I don't believe that is a satisfactory answer. We can make a

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reasonable estimate of how much fuel the airplanes that take-off from Homestead will burn and we know what is the efficiency that fuel is being burned at, and you can certainly calculate how many tons of black gunk will be dumped into Biscayne Bay.

Thank you.

000114 SANDRA FERNANDEZ: Good afternoon. My name is Sandra Fernandez. I am a life long resident of Dade County, and I love this town. I am proud to be a member of the Sierra Club, although my views here today are my own. I do not represent the club.

I attended the hearing last night at South Dade High School and I heard from a lot of people who would have you believe that if the airport was built in Homestead, that all of a sudden out of nowhere thirty-eight thousand jobs with average annual salaries of thirty-four thousand dollars a year are going to fall in their lap.

I have to wonder, are these people qualified to even step into those jobs?

I know what it's like to be unemployed. I lost my job last week. There are a lot of you who are looking for jobs, and you should try looking in the Miami Herald. There are thousands of jobs here in the Herald. If you don't have the skills to get the jobs,

go to school to get them. If you don't speak Spanish, go to school to learn it. I did. Its helped me to get jobs.

There are a lot of jobs specifically in the medical field in Dade County, that are looking for people to fill them, and also the sales profession.

Folks, this is ruining the environment. Converting Homestead Air Force Base into a commercial airport is not the way to produce jobs. The South Dade residents who are here to say they want the airport and the jobs that they will create are the same people that will sell the homes at a loss to escape the noise, pollution, congestion and traffic. It will create a mass exodus to Broward similar to what we had after Hurricane Andrew.

The poor people who can't afford electric dryers, they can't hang their clothes to dry in the yard.

Conclusion: I am supporting the Collier/Hoover plan. I think it makes a lot more sense and it protects our beautiful national parks for our future generations to enjoy.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Laurie Levitan.

000115 LAURIE LEVITAN: Good afternoon. My name is

Laurie Levitan with the "ROC Association", and a member of the Sierra Club. I've lived in South Dade for twenty-one years. My husband has lived here all his life.

This commercial airport is a bad idea. It's driven by the greed of politicians and developers who don't care if they trash our two exclusive national parks. They have not yet offered any environmental protection from the deafening noise or the bird migration and as we know, we lost enough bird life here.

They have not offered any environmental protection plan, because they can't. You cannot mitigate when you have jets blasting over the national park every few minutes at under a mile of altitude. There is no way to protect from that. Walls will not do anything. They can't protect from the noise. It will drive away tourism from Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park and noise will ruin the quality of life for Homestead residents.

They are simply trading tourism for urban ugliness, defending noise, the sight of trucks and warehouses, loss of agricultural land that will get paved over by this.

I endorse the mixed use plan, the

Collier/Hoover plan, because it's enviromentally friendly. Its people friendly. It will be attractive. It won't be destructive. I hope you take that into consideration.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Nancy Sullivan.

John Minore will be next.

000116 NANCY SULLIVAN: Could I use that podium?

Thanks. I came to your meeting last night with my neighbors from Key Largo. We were firmly behind the Hoover/Collier plan. We elected to have two people speak for us, over two hundred of us.

I came to the meeting with high expectations and left in disbelief. I had heard of politics in South Dade, but had never seen it in action.

The hefty lobbyist of Mayor Penelas and Senator Graham's people were there in force. At one point I thought maybe the mayor of Jacksonville was going to be the next speaker.

The hearings are to here for people affected, not Senator Graham.

Miami Lakes neighbors -- all the reasons that the Miami Lakes people have against an airport in their area are the same for the Largo people, only we have added threats, two national parks.

I ask you, please, put politics aside in your mission. Your mission is clear. Listen to the counter evidence on two reports that say the dangers to this area.

You have a job corp on your property. Now, educate the people of South Dade, plumbers, carpenters, computer experts, so that when the ground is broken on the Hoover/Collier plan, the people of Homestead will be ready with skills to succeed.

If the airport is developed, my quality of life and that of South Dade will be destroyed. A plane every two to five minutes over my house is unthinkable.

When you were given your mission, Gentlemen, nowhere that I know were you asked to create a mixed airport for the overflow from Miami International. When the airport is at capacity, it will be at capacity. Tourism will still flourish.

I wish there was some way that your reservist and local pilots can all get together one day and fly six hundred flights over the path you've indicated. Let the people of South Dade, Upper Keys and someone visiting our national park see the reality of what an airport complex could mean to them. Believe me, you will here a roar, not a jet engine,

but from the human cries of: No.

Visit the parks again. Ride to the Keys. Think of that film you saw today. Please don't let local and state politics rule your decision.

000117 JOHN MINORE: My name is John Minore. I've lived down here all my life and I worked at Miami International Airport for a little while. The places I've worked, the drinking water there had fuel in it, which we weren't allowed to drink, so they would give us bottle water or we had to buy sodas.

I used to be in the Air Force. I used to work on F-15 aircrafts at Eglin Air Force Base. What some of mechanics did after we changed the jet engine, with the excess fuel that comes out of the engine. They walk across the grass with a bucket and they would trip and there goes the fuel on the ground. I can show you exactly where that was taking place at Eglin if you ever want to fly me up there, and cargo aircrafts also are weighed down.

F-16s have the same engine F-15s have. They have to climb and get off the ground a lot quicker, getting a lot more altitude quieter as they get higher.

I also understand there is a contract awarded with a no bid process, which seems unfair. I

am totally against the airport there.

I also fish and dive in both parks and it is beautiful and it is nice and serene and I would like it to say that way. As a matter of fact, I would like you to keep the Air Force base as it is, no development at all.

That's all I've got to say.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Mavis Richards. The next card is Jacqueline Vizzi.

000118 MAVIS RICHARDS: My name is Mavis Richards. I am speaking on behalf of the "ROC." They are a civic association.

I must first of all give credit to Katie Sorenson on her views and her wisdom on her statements made. My concern is for the environment. Very few of us who study, I would dare to say, the environment and its intricacies, would know the devastating effect that the airport would have if such a thing is allowed to be developed.

We think of finances mostly. Few people think of the environment, where we have to live, and the effects on the birds, animals and to say nothing of humanity. We don't think of the children. We don't think of babies who are born in Florida with

lung tissues which are not developed. They have to breath all this junk from the airport. They will grow up with defective lungs, which they will suffer with for the rest of their lives.

Let us not think of finances only, because once this is done we cannot reverse the project, it is there to stay.

Then we have to think of pollution. Somebody mentioned the Nuclear plant in New Jersey. I lived in New York, and I know the fear that people have day after day, what if. We have to think of these things.

Agriculture has also been depleated. I have been in Florida steady for the last ten years, and I the things that I have seen, the changes, grass disappearing, the plant houses and a few palm trees. There is nothing to absorb the waste that even the human body gives out. We don't know how nature works. Even microscopic things in the environment take care of some of the things to keep us healthy.

We have to think money is not the only thing, and when you think of the frequency of those planes, children's ears that the decibels are going to destroy. We are going to have deaf children who will suffer for all their lives.

Think of those things. I have not prepared a speech, but I am concerned. I live here and I know what it is to be able to breath clean air. Let us think of these things and not be pushed by developers, capitalists. We have to remember the long term effects that they would have, and if something has to be done, I rather go with the mixed plan, but please not the airport. We will live to regret it.

Thank you.

000119 JACQUELINE VIZZI: My name is Jacqueline Vizzi. I am a professor and artist and teacher here in Dade County. I used to live in Miami Beach and I used to sit in my backyard and look at the beautiful sky and my beautiful canals and all of a sudden these huge planes would come and stop everything for awhile.

After awhile I called the airport and told them, but when the fish are dying in front of us, who is going to be doing that? When the birds have moved out of the Everglades, who is going to do that? When the vegetation, when the urban sprawl, when all the cars, all the trucks, all the garbage that goes around an airport, because check out our airport here in Miami. It is full of garbage.

Who lives around there? No one.

Yes, you call the airport and they'll tell you, we'll check the route. That's what they need to do.

I am against the airport. Getting that airport would be like opening a Pandora's box. You are in for a lot of problems that will be coming.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Ronald C. Dutton.

000120 RONALD DUTTON: My name is Ronald C. Dutton. I'd just like to go on the record saying I am opposed to the airport.

I digress a little bit. As few others said, I was born and raised here in 1936. My mother was born and raised here. Since 1995 I have seen a lot of changes in Dade County, and I can't say most of them are for the best. I've learned a little bit. I listened to Katie Sorensen's presentation and I think she's top notch.

Of the Hoover/Collier plan, what impresses me the most is that she said that it would take it out of the local government's hands and put it on the federal level. I think that's probably the best thing that can happen. It will take all the money that seems to get misappropriated through the local politicians, would take it out of their hands. They

wouldn't have access to it or not as much as if as they would with the airport.

The way it was awarded, HABDI from the Latin Builders Association or whatever you want to call it.

I worked extensively through Central American and the Caribbean Islands and see the governments how they work there, and I am sorry to say here in Dade County we are a Banana Republic and doing the same thing.

COLONEL McSHANE: Kay Rosendahl.

000121 KAY ROSENDAHL: I am Kay Rosendahl. I own a house approximately on Old Cutler and 216 Street. That's about as far south as you can get without going to Homestead.

I am concerned about the air traffic and the environment. I am also concerned about unemployment, because let's face it, it is not a proven statistic number they are giving. They have forgotten about the people who are homeless, that are not on unemployment. I am one of the people that has been unemployed since October.

You think it's easy to find a job? It is not. I was informed on the 1st of November that it was going to take four to six months to find a job. I thought they were crazy. I now realize they know what

they were talking about.

We need jobs, but the Collier and the Hoover Groups, they haven't considered the problems with the roads. We don't have roads to maintain the business traffic that they would need to go to the airport. That's Number 1.

All these plans have problems. The airport has a problem. It is going to affect the parks. There is no way around it. It will affect the parks.

So what do you need to do? You need to look and maybe you need to put some restructure on whatever you make the decision to do with this land, but something has to be done to improve the three options that have already been given, because none of them are to our advantages.

I want to see my property increase in value, not decrease. It's already at a point where it can't go any lower.

So please look into these things and see if there is something that someone can come up with a better plan, because they have to consider the roads. They have to consider the parks. They have to consider people in the neighborhoods and this land.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: George Alexander.

000122 GEORGE ALEXANDER: My name is George Alexander. I am a board member of the Kendall Federation of Homeowners, although I am not speaking in support of them tonight.

First of all, I want to tell you thank God for Katie Sorenson. If it wasn't for her, we wouldn't be here.

I want to speak on a subject. I lived on the flight path in Kennedy Airport, and every time I was standing on my backyard, I would see five planes, one right behind the other, coming down at about two hundred feet above my house.

Believe me, it is not a very pleasant situation. You won't enjoy it very much, you people living in Homestead.

I want to say about the traffic. Traffic is going only one way from the airport, if you have a cargo airport, and that is going north. We have just two roads, the Turnpike and US-1.

If you've ever traveled US-1, and I know you have, you know what it is to take a fifty minute ride to get to Miami. It will take you sometimes an hour and sometimes an hour and a quarter to get up to Miami from Kendall where I live.

We have to understand that these trucks that will be coming out of Homestead Cargo Airport Base will make a big, big difference in how long it will take us to get up to the Miami area or up north.

The same thing will happen on the Turnpike. Traffic will be at a standstill. It is at a standstill now. It will be much, much worse with all the trucks coming out of the air cargo airport.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Donald Groh.

000123 DONALD GROH: Hello. Good afternoon. My name is Donald Groh. I live on 7925 Southwest 201 Terrace in Miami, Florida. I was born here. I am a native. I work and live in South Dade.

I manage commercial property. That's my business. I am here to support the airport. We need the airport. It doesn't take a whole lot of common sense just to go down to South Dade, walk through some of the strip centers, and look and see how many empty spaces there are available. Look and see how many people are hanging out on the street corners without jobs, and talk to some of these business owners and see if they've made any money lately.

Since Hurricane Andrew, and since the Air Force has closed the base, we've gone through

dozens -- dozens of businesses failing. These are just mom and pop businesses who have their dreams and spent their entire life savings trying to make the American dream -- trying to realize the American dream.

It's not happening in South Dade. While the rest of the country is relishing in economic prosperity, South Dade is still in a major recession.

Why is that? Because the Air Force -- Air Force closed the base.

Now, I know you need to make cuts. South Com moved from their operation in Panama. They moved to Puerto Rico. They didn't even want them in Puerto Rico. We wanted them here. Why didn't they come and bring their base and revitalize the base here?

You can't answer that question, but you can do something now. You can help revitalize, rejuvenate the economy down here with the airport being the driving economic force.

I don't think these other alternatives are realistic, market driven. If the supply and demand is market driven, why aren't businesses coming down to South Dade? They are not. There are thousands and thousands of acres of land they could buy down in South Dade. They can come down here and buy up that

land and build these office complexes and golf courses. They are not. It isn't going to happen. That's not realistic.

We ask you for your help today and we need your help to help revitalize the economy down in South Dade, so we can realize our dreams.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Alice Smith.

000124 ALICE SMITH: I have been talking at these meetings now every time we've had one, which isn't that often, but since this started seven years ago there were meetings. If we had at that time done this properly, if our officials had done it properly at that time, you wouldn't even be here today. We would have heard about it, and we didn't know about a thing.

Even today we don't know the full impact of what that would do for us. In fact, it is my privilege in the next two weeks to host a meeting with Collier so that people in our area can get to know what they can offer us. This should have been done ages ago when they first came in, but our officials wanted to keep that quiet. We don't hear about that.

I live within five miles of the base. I live in Keys Gate. I don't represent Keys Gate. However, I can tell you that last week we took a vote

on the airport and it was unanimous, at the single family homeowners' meeting, that we don't want an airport.

We have beautiful birds. I love this island. This morning I was having my breakfast at twenty after 9:00, a little late but the meeting was late last night, and a roar of planes came over. It was ten minutes only, but it was enough so that my husband and I could not speak to each other.

Yes, we live on the porch. We want to stay outside. We don't want to go in. We want to enjoy the calm serenity of the area.

I do wish -- I invite all of you military people to come to my home and see what it is like and imagine what it could possibly be.

Homestead, after the hurricane, I was here then. We lost forty percent in Homestead of our population, mainly because a lot of people came and retired there, because of the hospital and other benefits. We only have twenty-seven thousand people in Homestead right now. I don't know what we are going to do with thirty-eight thousand jobs, but we do need jobs and we need the economy.

What we need is better schools. People do not come down here and live here because they can't

educate their children in Homestead. We have two of the worse schools in the country.

I guess my time is up, but thank you for letting me talk and if you'd like to come, my house is open to you, and I'd like you to come at twenty after 9:00 tomorrow morning please.

000125 FERNANDO PRO, JR.: My name is Fernando Pro, Jr. I am better known as Chappy. I think the one thing that we must all agree on is that there is only one question. We must improve the environment and the earth that we live in. That's a given. Anyone who doesn't understand that is not where they should be.

The other thing is: Must we have an airport? Well, the case can be made that in the future we are going to need this and we are going to need that. That tells me that that's going to mean that the problem that's been going on in this city is that of overdevelopment. We are not prepared. The schools are not prepared, and the roads. We are having problems even trying to take care of what is already here.

I hear this stuff about jobs. When you are talking about that, I think thirty-eight thousand jobs? I am going to tell you something. If you believe that this is going to bring thirty-eight

thousand jobs for people in Homestead, you are in a fantasy world.

What it means -- if you see the other plans, coupled with more homes and stuff, that's for the new people that will come in to take the majority of jobs there. So if you think back, and go talk to some of the people in Kissimmee where Disney World is, you talk to the people that were there when this thing first started, and they thought that they were going to have a wonderful thing happen to them, and the old timers that were there at the time, that were hoping for these jobs, they will tell you that at one time they had a very nice place to live, a very nice village, and that now has been ruined.

But the main point is: What will protect the environment, since that's what we must do? What is more enviromentally friendly? What plan is more friendly? What plan is something that we may actually end up with?

What I propose to you is that the Collier plan at this time is in its very nature enviromentally friendly.

The other thing is -- I am sorry. I didn't say that I am here with Cutler Ridge Concerned Citizens. I am not here just representing myself. We

look at it from two angles. One, what is most environmental mentally friendly and what has got problems to be environmental friendly?

A lot has been said about the fact that the plans, that it could be, that it could bring the jobs, it could not hurt the environment, but there is a lot of ifs in the plan.

Now, the thing to remember is that the Collier plan in itself demands and it will help their businesses keep the environmental cleanliness people want here.

The airport plan that is backed by the very people that have the contract to do the job and the way they got the contract, I wouldn't -- I just I cannot trust that they will follow and do what is best for the environment.

So I am very clear. We support the Collier plan, because it is the closest thing we can get to a win-win situation for the citizens down there.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you.

Alicia Schreiber.

000126 ALICIA SCHREIBER: Good afternoon. I am Executive Director of Community Development and Acting City Manager for the City of Homestead.

Having grown up in South Dade County, in the

heart of Matheson Hammocks, I am an abed water skier, scuba diver. I enjoy kayacking and I do that still today.

Later in my life I've come back to Homestead and the Homestead area, after having graduated as a civil engineer and city planner, and I came back to help rebuild their city and to help them after the devastation of losing the Air Force Base and the relocation of so many citizens. Not only did Homestead receive devastation, but there was something on top of that.

As a professional, there was a lack of jobs, and areas such as the Air Force Base that were left as a vacant homes. No one came back and touched them.

We look at projects, and we hear people come before us today and they talk of plans such as the Collier plan and other environmental plans. Before coming to the City of Homestead I had the pleasure of working for the Florida Department of Transportation for seven years, where we prepared SEISs.

Having read this particular document, I didn't find where they said to us there is an adverse environmental impact. I couldn't find places where they said it was going to endanger certain species or

contaminate our water.

The Collier plan, have you looked and thought, we are going to continue to build and we are going to bring people from other parts of the city and we are going to bring more traffic to the City of Homestead? We are going to use more capacity of water. We are going to use more capacity on our sewer. Dade County can't support our sewer today.

There are all different impacts to the community. You continue to use our water and you continue to use the sewer, bringing more people might not be the issue.

Bringing tourists that come and go sounds like something that is good for our economy, it's good for the City of Homestead, in bringing economic base to a place that lost so much economic base.

I think all of us need to take a look at the boards that are in the back there and look at capacity, look at the noise levels that are projected in SEIS and read what impact they are talking about, and look at your own impact that you are proposing for us, all different levels, all the different degrees, but there are impacts.

Your golf courses, there is fertilizer impacts. There is run-off impact. You are going to

create areas like we already have existing.

As a citizen, and as a worker for the City of Homestead, I believe strongly in this, that we need an airport facility in Homestead for a multitude of reasons that are outlined and people have stood up and spoke about today.

Thank you.

000356 PAT WADE: I was born in Miami. I've lived here all my life, only exceeded by a few years by Mr. Dutton.

I live and own a plant nursery in South Dade. I am on a faculty member of the University of Miami Medical School.

I do not understand for the life of me the shortsighted push for a commercial airport in South Dade, specifically when the mixed use plan or plans can provide the economic benefit that everybody talks about without the down side, and that's the key.

I have not heard one person today come forward and say that the other plans will not provide the benefit -- a similar benefit.

Is not MIA engaged in noise abatement? Is not MIA engaged in expansion? Is not MIA lagging behind other airports in passenger and cargo growth? Is not MIA plagued by corruption, waste and

inefficiency? Why would we want such a beast in our community?

I can speculate that a few rich and powerful will become more so. I cannot help but think that this is another power and greed, not economics, not need, not quality of life and certainly not for the environment.

I ask you to look at the pro-airport politicians, bankers, builders and ask you who would be the benefactor of this airport?

Dade County has been inflating for years their population projections. If you don't believe me, look at the Bureau of Census estimated by Dade County, and look at the State of Florida projections for Dade County.

Perhaps you are just learning about Dade County politics, but we are fed up with it. Don't hand Dade County this airport.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Ed Meyer.

000127 ED MEYER: Good afternoon. I've read a lot about the pros and cons of developing Homestead into a commercial airport. However, I am missing something really big in this equation, and that is, on one hand we hear that they are going to be over two hundred

thousand flights a year, putting us at a par with JFK. On the other hand we hear absolutely nothing from the airlines as to whether they support this development at all.

I raise this issue, because in the case of St. Louis, they built a reliever airport, which is a big TWA hub. No one came. It sits vacant.

Before we spend any tax payers money, our money, on the development of this commercial airport, I'd like to know where the airlines stand on it.

Now, the Aviation Department is supposed to bring the airlines into a stronger planning role as part of the sixty-six million dollars that Dade County is giving back the airlines. Now, if they are bringing the airlines into a stronger planning role, then let's get the answer before we spend any money.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Bernie Navarro.

000128 BERNIE NAVARRO: Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome. My name is Bernie Navarro. I am the past chairman of West Dade County Community Council 10.

A lot of growth has happened in that area, and instead of bringing our growth toward the west, I think we should make that growth go different ways, to the south and alleviate traffic congestions all around

Dade County by going the opposite direction. That's Number 1.

Number 2, where I live, the flight path of Miami International Airport is over the Everglades, and no mention has ever been said about that. So we live with it.

More people are buying homes where we live and buying homes in the Doral area, Number 2.

Number 3, I think we are being held hostage by the Hoover and Collier plan, by the sense that they say they have the mining field of the Everglades and Biscayne Bay if this project doesn't become approved. So I think we are being held hostage, and I don't think that's appropriate.

I am in favor of the airport and I feel it should be supported for the benefit of this community.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Next cards I believe are of individuals who spoke last night and signed up again today to speak.

Manny Romero.

000129 MANNY ROMERO: Good afternoon. My name is Manny Romero, and I reside at 26140 South Dixie Highway, Naranja, Florida.

I am trying to make a few observations about the Collier plan. First of all, the Collier plan -- the Collier plan, for the last several months its been trying to deal in Washington, completely bypassing this community, to appropriate a public asset of this community.

The Collier plan has tried to swap mineral rights for closed military base properties in five or six different communities, most recently in Orlando, and it has been denied in each and every one of them.

The Collier plan in proposing two new golf courses. We already have two golf courses, one in Keys Gate and the other one in the Redlands. I don't know, but has any study been done that they need any other golf course?

The Collier plan is taking a portion of the community, a part that belongs to South Dade residents, who want to proceed with Dade County's plan. The Collier plan is also appropriating land designated to the school board, depriving the school board of the valuable land at the base and jeopardizing the federal and state funding for the school.

That's why Dr. Phillips, President of Miami Dade Community College, is for the airport.

These are a few points that I see on the Collier plan.

The Collier plan went to Dade County hearings. They went up there and proposed their proposal to the commissioners to be voted on like the County proposal. Where were they four years ago?

The Colliers don't have enough of their own county. They want to take our own county, Dade County? It's ridiculous. This is really ridiculous.

I can't believe some people are talking about greed and money. I tell you I've been shuttled in and shuttled out because of this and because of that.

I think it's greed. I think all of you are right. This is greed. This is money. I think this is ridiculous.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Michael Matcher is a new name. We'll take him before we go to the other repeats.

000130 MICHEAL MATCHER: First of all, I'd say good morning and thank you for the opportunity to come before you. I don't envy the panel or the commission with what they have to do, the fact that you have to find a plan that's supported by the local community,

finding a plan that has the best possible economic revitalization program and protect the environment. Some job.

As I see, the proposed action is flawed in the fact that just by observing last night and this morning, the proposed action is not a plan that's supported by the local community.

Obviously, there are a lot of things with our political leaders, with the community leaders and with the residents on the airport plan.

The proposed action, I see a serious problem with the existing infrastructure. It is not going to be able to support it. I realize also that the current operations at the base cannot go on and will justify additional operations, but the thing that bothers me the most is that in South Dade the primary industry is agriculture.

In Dade County the Number 2 industry is agriculture. I think that building an infrastructure that's going to be needed to support the commercial airport is going to just totally decimate the agriculture industry.

I ask the question, we have an industry that brings in approximately nine hundred million dollars per year and we are going to take a gamble on the

jobs?

I noticed in the Draft, the words "Could bring thirty-eight thousand jobs." We are taking a gamble. We are decimating an industry that's proven to be profitable for one that we don't know what is going to happen.

I know that there has been a lot of people who say that all the retirees object and seem to be wealthy and old. I am not old. I am not retiring, and obviously I am not white.

So I ask this be reviewed and that the action -- that the action that is taken will definitely go forth in the commission to find (A) A plan supported by the community and (B) That it brings an economic revitalization and protects our environment.

Like I said, I don't envy you at all.

Thank you for the time.

COLONEL McSHANE: Next name is Mercedes Sellek.

000131 MERCEDES SELLEK: Good afternoon, Colonel. Thank you for the opportunity to speak again.

I won't burden the record with repeat remarks. I wanted to address a couple of other issues that I've been hearing people speak on.

The first issue I'd like to address is the no bid win of the proposed developer for the airport proposal, HABDI.

Something that people may not know is that the County brought in over forty different development firms from around the world, that were aviation experts and managers in airports, paraded them through Homestead Air Force Base after Hurricane Andrew destroyed it.

When the federal government began discussion with the County as a proposed conveyance to the County, and all the companies said, "We'll be happy to do it. Give us the money."

We said, "You put in the money and we lease it back to you and we work it out that way."

All the companies said: No.

We ended up with two proposals, Grace Group and Homestead Air Force Developer Group, Inc. proposal. The HABDI proposal was the adopted proposal. The numbers that they proposed were viable, and that was the alternative that was chosen by the commission in a public setting, in a public hearing and by a public vote.

With concern to the environmental impacts that we've addressed, water quality is improved by the

Surface Water Management Plan. It's improved by twenty-eight percent, it decreases discharged directly into the bay.

If you look at the Collier/Hoover plan, you see thousands of canals with no potential on-site storage. So you have run off and mitigation issues that aren't being addressed.

With respect to the air quality, the proposed action pursuant to the SEIS shows there will only be .6 increase in air emission which would exceed federal levels.

I would propose that the proposed action is a viable plan with mitigation alternatives in place and it would be the better alternative than the Collier/Hoover plan which continuous changes at a whim of the people and does not proffer something tangible that can be reviewed and discussed.

Thank you.

000132 KAREN SALES: My name is Karen Sales. I just had to comment on the Collier/Hoover plan. I've heard a few people that have supported it, apart from the fact that the SEIS reported that it is the least job intensive alternative. That's a quote, least job intensive alternative.

The Colliers say they are going to pay or

swap the mineral rights for the land, yet the value of the mineral rights seem to be questionable.

In 1998 the Collier draft had some land and retained the mineral rights. The mineral rights were of no concern to the government, because oil drilling is too regulated and the mineral rights were of little value.

Why give away the land to the Collier family to own outright? Why not leave the land to have the County of Miami-Dade own it. The land is ours. We want very control over the property. The County will own the land and we have to abide by the rules.

Let's not give the land away to the Colliers who in the past have threatened to start drilling oil without caring for the environment.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Jamie Brown.

000133 JAMIE BROWN: Good afternoon. I also want to address a couple of issues that have been impressed upon me as I've been listening to testimony specifically today.

Just a word of advise for those who are trying to make an argument with a straight face that the area around Homestead is not in need of economic development. That's a futile argument to make. You

are not going to be able to.

The poverty rate here in Homestead, thirty percent of the people live below the poverty level, Florida City thirty-seven percent.

Last year the federal government made the Homestead area part of a Federal Empowerment Zone. That's not done to an area that's on the rise and it's not in need of a major hand.

Also, last year Andrew Cuomo gave a speech in April to talk about the few remaining pockets of poverty that have been left behind in this wonderful economy. One of the specific areas that he cited was South Dade, the Homestead/Florida City area.

This is a federally acknowledged problem and no facts can be used to dispute that. It's impossible.

The other thing that I wanted to mention is that the Collier plan, which is really a lot of smoke and mirrors, has some significant problems for this county and its citizens. If this land is given to the Colliers, they have no obligation to do squat with it. They can bank the land and those problems that the community is facing will remain unresolved. That's something that needs to be taken seriously by everybody in this county and the leadership.

The other thing, even in a best case scenario, that they did put some kind of proposal in there, the jobs that it will provide are so significantly reduced in number and quality from the airport proposal. The Collier proposal at its best case scenario, in full build out, would provide twenty-four thousand fewer jobs than the airport.

That's being fairly optimistic. The types of jobs you get are basically caddies and other types of jobs that we get if we build a park.

We have significantly fewer earnings with those jobs. Under the airport proposal you have more than one billion dollars in new earnings. The Collier proposal would provide six hundred million dollars less, only three hundred million dollars at full bufld out, with best case scenario, being optimistic, the need for a mobile home park and a third golf course out there.

I want you to focus on the facts that are in the SEIS about what kind of jobs and opportunities we would get with a proposal like that.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Ignacio Sanchez.

000134 IGNACIO SANCHEZ: Good afternoon. My name is Ignacio Sanchez. I also would like to address a

little bit about the Collier proposal, and I call it proposal because that is all it is. It is not a legitimate plan.

If you look at the back of the room, at the nice poster boards, all we see are an artist's renditions. This are no plan there. It changes weekly.

I was speaking to the architect beforehand and he has no idea how they are going to develop that. In fact, three weeks ago they didn't know the Hoovers were going to be a part of the process.

As you engage in the process of making a determination, you have to determine whether any of these are serious or not. There is nothing serious about this proposal.

Number 2, as I stated before, the golf courses, we have plenty of golf courses in South Florida and particularly in this area.

I have great concern with respect to the Collier plan. That plan is filled with drenching millions of tons of soil that are going to be moved, but there is no mention of what they are going to do with it.

If the citizens of South Dade are worried about Mount Trashmore, as we call it, they ought to be

worried about where that soil is going to go and in what state it will be in.

In fact, I project within four or five years or so its impossible to build. We can't build these canals and therefore now that we own it a fee simple title, now that MIA is at capacity, they will hold this county up for ransom in order to set that property up as a commercial airport.

I challenge every one to look at that plan and tell me it doesn't look like an airport. If you lay over on it asphalt, if you take the canals, the airport is set up in a way that has the hotels off of the runway, the golf course area and Avis and Hertz rental parking lot.

The Colliers have gone to eight different communities and tried to pull off this kind of land swap. All eight communities have said: We are not interested in your bag of beads. That is what they are trying to pull off with Dade County.

They've been rebuffed in all eight communities and they should be rebuffed here also.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Salomon Esquenazi.

000135 SALOMON ESQUENAZI: Good afternoon, Colonel. My name is Salomon Esquenazi. We've heard several

people say that they want the Collier proposal because that is an alternative to the airport plan.

Whenever I hear the Collier plan, I can only think of two things, golf courses and RV park. In fact, out of the six hundred eighty acres that the Collier proposal wishes to exchange for this so called mineral rights, whatever that is, three hundred eighty-three acres equates to fifty-six percent of the land that is subjected to these proposed transfers will be used exactly for that golf course and RV park.

Now, I am not an abet golf player. From time to time I play golf. In the golf courses there is a golf shop. There are one or two people that are administrative. Sometimes they have golf caddies and the rest is staff that takes care of the premises, gardening and such. That's it.

The other side is the RV park. Again, you only have a couple of administrative people and the rest is maintenance. That is it. There is no employment there.

According to the SEIS, the Collier plan is estimated to be the least job intensive alternative out of all the plans. It is estimated that the Collier plan will generate fourteen thousand jobs.

That's twenty-four thousand jobs less than the airport proposal. That is also estimated to generate three hundred and fifty million dollars in revenue, which again is at least six hundred fifty million dollars less than the airport's proposal.

And even then, whatever jobs are in fact generated by the Collier proposal, those jobs are going to be low paying jobs, caddies, administrative people, et cetera.

You know, I've been listening very carefully to our community last night. I heard people repeatedly talk about jobs. Again today you hear people talking about jobs. This community needs jobs and more jobs.

It is therefore my opinion that the Collier plan will simply not generate the number and the kinds of jobs that this community is seeking. For that reason I urge you to transfer the base back to Miami-Dade County.

Thank you.

000136 HOWARD BEHAR: Good afternoon, and thank you.

My name is Howard Behar. I am a resident of Miami-Dade County. The Colliers have an absolutely incredible history of attempting to take away from

cities real estate and developments all over the country.

The Colliers have continuously used their mineral rights in Big Cypress Preserve as a type of currency in order to obtain land from the federal government, but in actuality there is a big question as to what these mineral rights are worth. In actuality it is worth nothing.

I challenge a single environmentalist in this group or anybody for that matter who would permit oil drilling in Big Cypress Preserve today or even to tomorrow. Its absolutely unquestionable. It cannot happen and should not happen.

To the Collier, in actuality they are getting land, sixteen hundred acres, for the price of zero, nothing. That's wrong. That should not happen.

However, their attempt to use this as currency is not new for any developing company in the United States. They attempted to obtain the naval base in Orlando. The people in Orlando absolutely rejected this as a means to take away from the people of Orlando and hand it over to a private developer.

It happened in San Diego, in Orange County, the same thing. Let's swap the mineral rights, worth

nothing, and take the property from the people of San Diego. The people of San Diego said, no, it's ours. It should go to us.

In each situation rather than the development company going to the local population, they attempt to take the land in fee simple, and then the first thing they do is go to Washington, then go back to the local population. Again, that's wrong.

Finally, let me state that the Colliers have made an application to drill eight hundred twenty-five square miles in Big Cypress Preserve. This is going to affect federally protected wilderness areas that are inhabited by Bald Eagles and Florida panthers.

I'd like to pose a question right now. Who is really looking out for the environment right now?

Thank you.

000137 BRUCE DRUM: My name is Bruce Drum, with the Dade County Aviation Department.

I'd just like to make a few observations and give you some more aviation insight.

From what I heard today, again, as I said last night, I support the process. This is a difficult issue for our community and we as aviation professionals will do our job no matter what happens, but let me add some professional aviation perspective,

if I may.

First of all, the figures on the types of aircrafts and the numbers are estimates. They were put together by a development staff about three or four years ago in preparation of making a proposal to develop this airport.

The industry is rapidly changing. It has changed significantly in the last six months with the requirement of Stage 3 as of January 1st, as Dellapa said this morning.

Further enhancement will happen around 2004 and 2005, and most of the aircrafts flying in Miami International will be at the brand new Stage 3. Some of the aircrafts now are 727s, but they will be replaced by brand new 737s and 820s.

The type of airline that will go into Homestead is a little bit different -- it is a personal opinion -- than what we originally saw two, three, four years ago.

Its been portrayed here that this is a cargo airport. That's not going to happen in my professional opinion. Folks, you don't move cargo from the infrastructure around Miami and move it, lock, stock and barrel overnight to an airport.

An airport such as Homestead has been

proposed as a reliever airport, satellite airport, and I think you have a blueprint for what happens to satellite airports in California.

LAX is a big airport, and there are five satellite airports. That's the type of airport where you leave our home and catch a flight to a neighboring city using a lear jet or 737.

Cargo in our proposal four years ago was a very small portion. So its very inadequate to name this a cargo airport. This is not a cargo airport simply. Please keep that in mind.

One last comment, and one other point I want to make before my time is up, there is no tax payers money involved. This is coming from user fees that are generated from the airlines and, yes, we are in consultation with the airlines. They do play a part in this.

Who will come to Homestead? It will probably be some of your low cost carriers, because Homestead represents the low cost entry point in the future when the need is there.

My last thought is: No one is really talking about fifteen, twenty years, twenty-five years down the road, where are we going to put the airplanes, because we are the ones that get on airplanes. We are

the ones that have relatives and get on airplanes. We are the ones that demand commerce. We are the problem, but I don't see anybody solving a capacity issue and that is a big part of this equation.

000138 JONATHAN ULLMAN: Good afternoon. My name is Jonathan Ullman. I am the South Florida Everglades Representative for National Sierra Club. We are the oldest and largest grass root environmental organization, about six hundred thousand members nationwide, and about three thousand members in Miami-Dade and Monroe County.

This is a big issue. This is an important issue. This is an issue that if you make the wrong decision, there is no turning back. It is gone.

I want you to think about the video that you saw today. As I was looking at that video, and we were laughing, but what were we laughing about? We were laughing at the comical nature of this entire situation that we are put into.

We have two national parks that are enjoyed by the American people, not just by the American people, but people worldwide. We are contemplating putting a commercial airport within a mile and a half of one of the parks and eight and a half miles from the other park.

The first park being Biscayne National Park, an outstanding Florida water and the only national park in the continental United States.

The second is Everglades National Park, which we are about to embark on a 7.8 billion dollar restoration plan, because the environment is messed up and we need to fix it.

So now you are saying you are going to consider allowing Miami-Dade County, which we already established has quite a few problems in its other airport, Miami International, in terms of scandal. Every single day there is another scandal story coming out of Miami International. We are going to allow this county to sell out those national parks and we are going to have to explain when there are visitors who try to enjoy those national parks, that we allowed Miami-Dade County to do this.

That's not going to happen. We are going to be heard. Bruce Babet and Carol Browner say that this would be devastating. They do not want to see it here.

The Sierra Club is going to tell the rest of the country. We are launching a national campaign to tell the rest of the country what is going on down here, and they won't be amused. They won't find it

comical, and I want to thank you and I'll talk to you later.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: I've gone through all of the cards that were presented to me today. Let me go back and see if any of the folks who signed up today have returned.

000139 BILL McHUGH: I am Bill McHugh. I am here to vote for preventation of the airport. I am an ex-FAA employee. I retired some ten years ago and established a consulting firm for aviation consultants.

While I was with the FAA, I was their expert on their port compliance as well as seaport certification inspection. I was also in Chicago at the Miami Port District Office.

I participated for the FAA in the transfer of two surplus properties, one in Detroit Metro in 1990 and the "Bacalar" Air Force Base at Columbus, Indianapolis. That was a successful general aviation airport.

Here in Miami there is a large demand for aviation services and there are few facilities remaining that can handle that demand.

Under the Homestead Air Force base there is

a facility that is there. The infrastructure is there to handle it and is available to be used for that purpose.

The statistics are here in the back, as well as the SEIS to show there is a need for this facility and if this facility no good for an airport sooner or later you are going to have to develop a facility for it.

Based upon the track record in the last twenty years as far as development of a new airport in this area, there has been no new airport done other than the training airport out in the Everglades.

You are going to have to do something about it and this appears to be one of the best ways to get a remedy to the aviation demand that you have in this area.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: That's all the folks that signed up today. Is there anybody here that signed up last night that did not get to speak and was not here earlier when I called all the names? Apparently not.

I am going to take the folks who signed up today but didn't show for this session and add them to the back of the stack and I'll call their names one time tonight when we get started.

Any further public comments for this session? You may add a few comments if you wish, Mr. Groh.

000140 DONALD GROH: My name is Donald Groh and I spoke a little while ago. The three minutes wasn't long enough to get across what I would like to say.

One of the things is the employment situation down in South Dade. A lot of people don't have jobs down there. They drive to Broward County every day. They drive to Key Largo. They have to drive one or two hours to go to work. That's ridiculous. We need jobs down here.

I was a contractor by trade. After the Hurricane we rebuilt dozens of properties. I used to have over a dozen workers working for me down here. There is no building going on down in South Dade right now, not enough to warrant -- to sustain the contracting business and revitalizing the Air Force base and having an economic engine that's going to bring prosperity down to the South Dade people who will be able to work and live down in South Dade where we enjoy life down here.

That's the reason I still live in South Dade, because we love it down here, and I don't believe that the airport is going to deter from the

quality of life that we now have down in South Dade. I believe that we can work together and make this airport safe to the environment with the technology today and also benefit from the economic point of having anyone down here.

I just want to say thank you again for letting me have a few more minutes for my position.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you.

I want to thank everyone who came here for your comments and for participating in this public hearing. Your comments will be extremely helpful to the Air Force and other agencies in preparing the final SEIS.

As we close here, I do want to remind you that if you didn't comment or if you decided you have more to say, you may write your comments down and leave them here with the staff or you can mail them in later on. Just make sure they are mailed no later than March 7, so they can be addressed in the final SEIS.

Thank you again for attending this public hearing. This hearing is adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

CERTIFICATE

STATE OF FLORIDA)
) SS:
COUNTY OF DADE)

I, NIEVES SANCHEZ, Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Florida at Large, hereby certify that the foregoing pages, numbered from 1 to 116, inclusive, are a true and correct transcription of the stenographic notes of the proceedings had and testimony taken in the foregoing case, at the time and place hereinabove set forth.

I further certify that I am not of counsel, I am not related to nor employed by an attorney to this suit, nor interested in the outcome thereof.

The foregoing certification does not apply to any reproduction of this transcript by any means unless under the direct control and/or direction of the certifying shorthand reporter.

Dated at Miami, Dade County, Florida, this 18th day of February 2000.

Nieves Sanchez
Commission # CC 849228
Expires Aug. 11, 2003
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NIEVES SANCHEZ, Shorthand Reporter

Transcript of
Public Hearing

February 2, 2000
7:00 p.m.–11:00 p.m.

Signature Gardens
12725 SW 122nd Avenue
Kendall, Florida

PUBLIC HEARING

ON

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL

IMPACT STATEMENT

DISPOSAL OF PORTIONS OF THE FORMER

HOMESTEAD AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA

ORIGINAL

Wednesday, February 2, 2000
7:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Signature Gardens
12725 S.W. 122nd Avenue
Miami, Florida

Thereupon, the following Public Hearing was held before CHIEF TRIAL JUDGE MICHAEL B. McSHANE.

(Thereupon, for persons wishing to state their opinions before the commencement of the Public Hearing, the following private sessions were held:)

000141 ANTONIO V. CAULA: I'm Antonio V. Caula and I'm director of the Latin Builders Association and I'm the regional president for Banco Popular, South Florida Region.

I do quite a bit of traveling and find there is a tremendous need for an addition airport. I urge those that have not read the study that was made to read it where it shows that it will improve the quality of life by twenty-eight percent and will not do major harm to the environment. So I'm basically here just to show my support on behalf of that.

Most Metropolitan areas around the U.S. have the advantage of having a second airport and why shouldn't we have one.

000142 MARTHA C. SEOANE: My name is Martha C. Seoane and I'll start out by saying that I'm for the Homestead Airport. I think it's

a very good project. I think it will enhance the community and create many jobs.

I'm definitely opposed to the Collier-Hoover project because I think that really will not bring any jobs to the community. It's not what this area needs.

I live by the Miami International Airport. I see on a daily basis how congested it is, how overpriceed all the fees are in the airport. We definitely need something to relieve the Miami International Airport. I think this is an excellent way to to do so.

I wish the president and vice-president would keep their promise as to helping us out with that, to fulfill that project. Basically, that's about it.

000143 CARL GOMEZ: My name is Carl Gomez. The only thing I want to say, the people who want to take the airport away, that money, don't stay in Dade County, they go outside.

So I want the airport because we need a job. We got a lot of people in here without job. And I don't want anybody taking

the money out of here to another place.

000144 CATHARINA BERNABEI: My name is Catharina Bernabei and I'm a teacher for twenty-five years and I'm against having an airport so close to Everglades National Park. It will be destructive to the habitat and to the animal life there and to the plant life.

I believe having an airport of such a major proportion, which it is going to be a big airport, will encroach on life and will mean in the long run, the end of the park. I believe biologists have said that the birds and other species will be disturbed in the pattern of mating and way of life.

Right to this day, we see Ibis already roaming the streets of Miami due to lack of habitat. And I'm also afraid not only of the noise level, but of pollution coming from the airplanes. Also, more people will begin to live there and development will encroach on the park. It's a real danger.

The Everglades are unique in the world. We need to be conscientious about what we leave behind for generations to come.

There are more appropriate uses which would respect our national parks, especially the Everglades; such as, recreational facilities, to use the Homestead Air Force Base as a means for tourism. Florida thrives on tourism, eco-tourism. And it should be feasible to find an economic alternative for the people of Homestead, living in harmony with our surroundings, which is the environment.

We must protect the Everglades at all means. As a teacher, I try to instill awareness in the students of the beauty of what we have here in Florida. Again, I can't stress enough how unique it is. It is a world heritage site.

I feel really strongly about this. If people say the noise level of having a huge airplane flying over the Everglades every two seconds means nothing, just imagine if we were in a bedroom with our boyfriend or husband and there was an airplane taking off every two seconds. How would that change our pattern of life together in a marriage or whatever?

So the birds and the mammals and the reptiles have no defense. They cannot speak for themselves. We are the keepers of the parks and all the inhabitants of the parks and we need to speak out for them and to leave this beautiful land as a heritage for generations to come.

If we are selfish and we just think about getting richer and have more developers build homes and an airport and construction going on, those are riches that are temporary. And our parks are priceless. There is no price to place on the Everglades. Thank-you.

000145 LAURA HARDY: My name is Laura Hardy and I'm here tonight to express my disappointment in the plan to turn the turn the land down there into an airport.

I'm concerned about all of the issues of the environment and wildlife, birds and noise level, especially the planes flying overhead. And I think the opposing plan is an excellent plan, it will bring a lot of jobs and revenue into the area.

I know there are a lot of people here tonight to show their opinions against the alternative plan because they see thirty-eight thousand jobs coming in for the airport. I think there would be a whole lot more jobs coming in from what I read from the proposal of this other group, the Collier-Hoover group.

It seems to me there will be a lot better usage of the land. They'll make it into an aquarium and parks and campgrounds, hotels and things of that nature. And I would like to see it preserved for my children and their children. And that's it.

000146 JOHN NIEHE: My name is John Niehe and I'm a concerned citizen. I believe national parks are created for the preservation and enjoyment of our natural surroundings, the plants and animals, and never to be disturbed.

A commercial airport between two national parks and the Florida Keys Marine Sanctuary does not seem to make much sense. I believe that a commerical airport will

pollute both air and the water and basically create a lot of noise pollution.

Additionally, an estimated two to three aircraft accidents a year caused by collisions with birds concerns me. Turkey Point Nuclear Power Plant is within six miles of Homestead Air Force base.

As we all know, environmentalists have pledged they will put this into years of litigation before an airport could even be considered. In addition, the jobs at this airport, if it ever came to be, would not be for residents of Homestead as they would have you believe.

There are many unemployed air traffic controllers, flight-line mechanics and members of the Teamster Union which would be brought in to truck all of this cargo.

An alternative plan, the Collier-Hoover plan, is both economically and environmentally friendly and currently has the support of many of the environmental groups. This will allow good results and jobs much faster as needed in the Homestead-Florida City area.

Both the Collier and Hoover organizations have track records which are easy to verify. And I believe that this line of thinking, the eco-tourism in this location, makes a lot of sense, just north of the Florida Keys and just south of Miami. That's it.

000147 R. W. HAYES: My name is R. W. Hayes and I'm a resident of South Dade County and a native Floridan. I was stationed at Homestead Air Force Base for a time. I think that an airport at this location would be an ecological diaster for South Dade County. I believe that the history of the base itself and the concurrent problems that it encountered, some of which are still there, pollution, ecological problems, is evidence for the future.

Between two national parks, as it is, the best use of the land would be for a public and private park area, private enterprise to flourish with recreational facilities and water activities and activities that are compatible with the

ambiance of the area.

I think through that device, many jobs can be created of a compatible nature than could be for an airport. I also think that anyone who lives adjacent to other airports in South Florida, such as Tamiami Airport and the Miami International Airport and the airports that are in Broward county, can testify to the problems that occur.

I feel that this is our only chance to save this part of Florida. And I think we have to be forward-thinking for future generations as a legacy to them.

000148 BOBETTE MAUCK: My name is Bobette Mauck and I'm going against having an airport. I think it should be left as the Air Reserve Base.

I'm against the additional air traffic between the two national parks. It would be detrimental to the environment. Having the airport, when you add the air traffic, they are going to want to kill the birds because they say the birds will get in the way of planes and cause a hazard. And we

need to leave open spaces for the birds' habitat, because if we keep concreting over everything, there's not going to be anything left for the animals.

000149 ADRIENE HOHENBERG: My name is Adriene Hohenberg and I'm a resident of Miami-Dade County, but more than anything, I'm a resident of the world. And as such, I'm very concerned about the future for all generations.

The proposed airport in the Everglades poses many problems for the future of the Everglades as well as our planet. The major problem will be borne by Florida, specifically South Florida, in that South Florida gets its fresh water supply from the viability of the Everglades.

An airport in the Everglades is not only contraindicated to the Everglades Restoration plan, but it will impede the hydrologic cycle and cause irreparable harm to the fresh water for South Florida.

Additionally, we are a World Heritage site and the Wetlands have been

given international importance under the RAMS international agreement, which should indicate and does indicate how critically important the Everglades are.

If you damage this fragile ecosystem, you will lose wading birds, whose populations are already seriously diminished, as well as migrating birds and other birds and amphibians, reptiles and mammals that are all crucial to the health and well-being of this ecosystem.

The Everglades is unique. There is nowhere else in the world like it. Please, if you value the future for all of us, your children and your grandchildren, do not allow this airport to be built in our precious land.

000150 IRENE MURRAY: My name is Irene Murray. I would like to be on the record that having five generations of military, I feel strongly about the military and do not like the idea of a reliever airport.

I lived in Coral Gables under the path of MIA for over a year. We moved

because of the dirt and the noise. We moved to Homestead because it was quiet. We have a boat on the bay at one of the yacht clubs.

I'm a realtor broker and I have my own company, but an airport is going to be a second MIA in the south and I'm not sure that's what we need. I would like to see some other alternatives.

I like the idea of the aquarium and research park. And I would like to keep Biscayne Bay from degrading any further. I wish I could tell you something more scientifically, but I'm not a scientist.

000151 THERESA BRIDGES: My name is Theresa Bridges. I would like to speak on behalf of the Mixed Use Alternative for the former Homestead Air Force Base. I believe the property can economically benefit South Florida through the mixture and not damage the environmentally-sensitive parks that are nearby.

I have a lot of experience in accounting and planning and I do not believe that the projections upon which the

commerical airport proposal is based, are sound assumptions. I firmly believe that the commerical airport would not be successful economically and become an albatross and will not only damage the environment, but will not be financially beneficial to the community.

000152 ROSA QUINTANA: (Through Juan E. Gandara, Sr. professional interpreter) My name is Rosa Quintana. I'm in agreement for the airport project in Homestead. There is a definite need in order to obtain jobs.

My son is looking for employment. He works in Fort Lauderdale and I wish he could be closer. There is a need, definitely.

000153 DARCIE QUINTANA: My name is Darcie Quintana and I'm for the Homestead Airport. I feel that we do need more jobs and especially at a closer airport. I feel that it won't harm the environment or do anything to it. It won't have any effect on it. And once again, I'm for the Homestead Airport.

000154 SALLY SEETOO: My name is Sally Seetoo. I'm not in favor of another airport in the area. I feel that it will add jobs to the economy, however, we do not want more people in Florida. It's already too crowded. There is no open space left. It's the most crowded city I have ever seen in my entire life.

I think that we need the open space and we need the few wild animals that may exist. And we need cleaner air than we have now. To add to air pollution would be serious because it's already bad in Miami. We just need to start somewhere to save whatever space is left. That's all I have to say.

000155 SAMUEL ORTEGA: (Through Juan E. Gandara, Sr., professional interpreter) My name is Samuel Ortega. I'm in agreement for the construction of the base because there is an opportunity for many jobs to be obtained and it helps towards the development of Miami and is a source of revenue for the city. It helps also with the

trade towards Latin America. That's all.

000156 LONDON SPENCER: My name is London Spencer and I'm an environmentalist. I have deep concerns for the two national parks. I just had a fresh reminder of what can happen to the ecosystem with the crash in California. I would have deep concern that if we have an environmental disaster like that in either one of the national parks, that damage could be done.

I do work with hazardous material, I'm a specialist, and I just want to voice my concerns and reject this application for the use of a commerical airport at Homestead Air Force Base. I'm also worried about the sound pollution, the light pollution and how this will have an effect on the area.

I'm also very concerned about the traffic that will be added to Krome Avenue, which is the trucking route from that facility. I have concerns about the increased traffic. They want to have four lanes on Krome Avenue, opening up Krome and the Redlands to more development, endangering

the agricultural area.

(Thereupon, the private session was concluded.)

PUBLIC HEARING

7:00 p.m.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Before we get started, I have a couple of announcements. Please do not display any signs or banners from your seats, as you will be blocking someone else's view.

Also, if you have cell phones, I learned last night that just about everybody in the room seemed to have a cell phone and they all went off at least once during the night. If you have a cell phone, please turn off the ringer. You can have them vibrate or you can just turn them off and get your messages later. Don't interrupt the proceedings by having your phone ring.

I anticipate that we are going to end this evening at 11:00 o'clock, whether we are done with all of the speakers or not. I think that is late enough. We will try to keep moving along and hopefully everyone who signed up to speak, will get to speak before

11:00.

Speaking of that, if you signed up last night or this afternoon but did not get to speak and you want to speak tonight, you should tell the lady in the purple dress, who is sitting by the entrance doors at the rear right outside of the lobby and she will pull your card and you will be in the first group of people that are called on tonight.

I will make that announcement later on for other folks that wander in and didn't hear it now. We want to get those folks that stayed late last night to have the first opportunity to speak tonight.

Okay. That's all the announcements. We will move into the formal part of the program.

Welcome to this Public Hearing on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on the disposal of portions of the former Homestead Air Force Base.

I'm Colonel Mike McShane and I'm the Chief Trial Judge of the Air Force, stationed at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, DC.

My normal duties include presiding over Air Force court-martials, but this week, I've been made available to preside over this series of five hearings which are being held in this area concerning the disposal and subsequent reuse of former Homestead Air Force Base property.

Just so you know, I have not been involved in the development of any of these proposals that are being considered, and my job is just to make sure that we have a fair and orderly hearing here tonight.

I want to thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to come here tonight for this public hearing. If you're interested in further information about the proposals, I hope you took time to visit with the technical staff prior to this portion of the hearing.

In preparing this Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, or Draft SEIS, which you will hear us refer to it as, it was the Air Force's goal to understand the environmental implications of deciding for what purpose and to whom to convey surplus

property at former Homestead Air Force Base.

The Draft SEIS examines reasonable ways in which the property might be developed, used, and the reasonably foreseeable environmental consequences of the alternatives.

At this time, I would like to introduce Major Mike Chipley of the Air Force Executive Issues Team. He is an engineer with a Ph.D. in civil engineering from the University of California.

Major Chipley will discuss the proposed action and alternatives and provide a short synopsis of the reuse issues. Since the overall purpose of these hearings is to obtain input from you on the contents of the Draft SEIS, the presentation will be short.

MAJOR CHIPLEY: Thank-you, Colonel McShane. I, too, would like to extend my thanks to all of you for taking time to provide your comments on the Draft SEIS.

For the past several years, we have been engaged in the process of completing the realignment and reuse of the former Homestead

Air Force Base as required by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act.

The Air Force's primary goal in this process is to transfer the properties in a manner that supports local plans for economic revitalization of South Florida and protects Biscayne Bay and the nearby national parks. A disposal must also be compatible with continuing the existing military and law enforcement missions. The Air Force and Federal Aviation Administration, or FAA, are the designated lead agencies for the Draft SEIS.

The Air Force has decision-making responsibilities for the transfer of the property. The FAA has decision-making responsibilities for airport facilities.

There are three cooperating agencies. One cooperating agency is the National Park Service because it manages Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park.

Another cooperating agency is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service because of its responsibilities to ensure threatened and

endangered species are adequately considered and because of the proximity of Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

And the third cooperating agency is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency because of its regulatory responsibilities.

The contractor hired by the Air Force to actually conduct the analysis is Science Applications International Corporation, or SAIC for short. They have been supported by another contractor, Landrum and Brown, which performed the airport planning and noise analyses.

I would like to take a couple of minutes to update you on the SEIS process and what has occurred since the scoping period ended in July of 1998. More than 440 individuals, organizations and agencies provided written input during our 132 day scoping period. And 195 people spoke at our public scoping meetings.

The size and complexity of the Draft SEIS has grown substantially because of the number and diverse nature of issues and because of the many federal agencies, state

and local governments, private organizations and concerned citizens involved.

Midway through the analysis, two mixed-use proposals were received which were incorporated into the analysis. We recognize that this has been a long process for everyone. We want you to know many other communities have also struggled through the base closure process.

Some former bases have been developed for aviation uses, others for non-aviation uses. The success of redevelopoment depends upon the local community involvement and support.

The Draft SEIS examines a number of reuse alternatives for remaining surplus property at the former base. Ongoing reuse involving property that has already been transferred, like the Job Corps Center, the Dade County Homeless Trust, the regional park and other needed properties, would continue under any of the alternatives.

The alternatives underwent thorough and complex analyses of the environmental and economic impact that could potentially occur

as a result of redevelopment. Fourteen topics were used as the basis for the analysis.

Public and agency concerns that were expressed at our scoping meetings identified important issues and helped focus our analysis. Those concerns have been incorporated throughout the Draft SEIS.

When the reuse planning process was initiated for Homestead Air Force, Miami-Dade County was designated as the local reuse authority to develop a reuse plan for the former base.

The county has proposed that the 1,632 acres of remaining surplus property at former Homestead Base be transferred to Miami-Dade County Aviation Department for development of a commerical airport.

This is the proposed action addressed in the Draft SEIS. The analysis of the proposed action included identifying and assessing new flight tracks that would be used at the commerical airport.

Airport operations, in general, are characteristically different than commerical

or residential land uses in the types of numbers of vehicles, equipment and people, and the resulting impact to the environment.

The main issues of the proposed action involve air pollution, storm water run-off and nose levels. Another alternative examined in the Draft SEIS is a commerical spaceport. The main issues with the commercial spaceport alternative involve the uncertainties related to the licensing process, safety and potential increase in noise.

Three approachee were examined for non-aviation uses, presented as the Mixed-Use Alternative, Market-driven development, The Collier Resources Company proposal, and the Hoover Environment Group plan.

The Mixed-Use alternatives could create higher intensity of use in a shorter period of time, but may have less environmental effects on the national parks.

The Draft SEIS also includes the No Action alternative, which means the property continues to belong to the government and reverts to caretaker status.

Under each alternative, the Air Force, Florida Air National Guard, and Customs Service continue to use the runway for their current military missions.

The Draft SEIS addresses each alternative in the context of future growth in South Florida and also takes into account potential cumulative impacts of other projects. It also includes some historical information where available.

Your views and comments on the Draft SEIS will be important as we work toward completing the Final SEIS. We are now about half-way through the 60-day public comment period.

We scheduled these hearings to provide you an opportunity to review the Draft SEIS and formulate comments you can give here today, and also to provide some time after these hearings so you can incorporate things you might learn here tonight, into written comments.

Whether you choose to comment today or to provide your comments in writing between now and March 7th, we look forward to

receiving your inputs and assisting us in completing the Final SEIS.

The Final SEIS, scheduled for completion in July, 2000, will include comments made at the public hearings or submitted in writing during the public comment period for the Draft SEIS, along with Air Force and FAA responses to your comments.

A decision on what action will be taken concerning the transfer of the disposal property will be made no earlier than thirty days after publication of the Final SEIS.

We will continue to distribute news releases and send newsletters to those on our mailing list throughout the final course of the SEIS process.

Anyone wishing to be added to the mailing list should complete an attendance card located at the registration table in the foyer and check the appropriate box on the card.

In summary, I would like to say that we do understand this is a complicated and often frustrating process. Let me reiterate that neither the Air Force nor FAA proposes

to directly develop the surplus property.

The Air Force's goal is to transfer the property in a manner that supports local plans for economic revitalization and protects Biscayne Bay and the nearby national parks. A disposal must also be compatible with continuing the existing military and law enforcement missions.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Thank-you, Major Chipley. Bach of the proponents of the alternatives shall have the opportunity to describe their proposal and speak about it.

Miami-Dade County representatives of been given ten minutes to speak about their proposals. You may also have noticed that some of the other proponents, although they elected not to give a presentation, have materials available at the tables in the back of the room.

At this time, I would call on the representatives from Miami-Dade County to discuss their proposal.

GARY DALLAPA: Thank-you. Good evening. My name is Gary Dallapa and I'm the Aviation Director for Miami-Dade County. We operate Miami International Airport and five general airports here in Miami-Dade County.

I have a little over thirty years of service with the community and with Metro-Dade government. I would like to thank-you again for giving us the opportunity to present our recommendations for redevelopment of the former Air Force Base.

It's important for the panel to bear in mind that the aeronautic issues I'm addressing tonight are not just South Dade issues, not just Miami-Dade issues, but are for all of South Florida.

In previous testimony, you have heard from other elected officials on what the decision on reuse means to the continued prosperity of this county. History is on the side of aviation.

The South Florida community has a long-standing prominent position in aviation dating back to the first airline terminal in the United States. Continuing through foreign

trade. This community has come to rely on aviation as the underpinning of our local economy and the chief provider of jobs.

All is not well however. The current system of airports is taxed to the extremes of its limits and will prove unable to meet future market demands unless augmented by new aviation.

In support of this understanding, the airport has a display with documents and graphics on future aviation demand and our capacity to meet that demand. It's imperative that you understand that the inability to meet market demand, means loss of economic growth and seriously impacts our employment base and business community.

You may be aware of our efforts to accelerate the construction of a fourth runway at Miami Internationl Airport. That is the single most important element of the department's long-range development plan. However, this final plan to meet our capacity at Miami International will not be able to meet the air traffic forecast for beyond the year, 2015.

Our primary development strategy is to provide the facilities now as well as long-term demand. The critical element of this strategy is the flexibility to be able to react to future aviation growth that may be unforeseen today in stimulating foreign commerce growth.

Miami-Dade's most limiting capacity constraint today is the number of full service commerical runways available in our airport system to safely manage aircraft. MIA is currently at a point where no additional runway can be provided.

Numerous efforts in the last three decades to identify new sites in South Florida for a commerical aviation facility have proven fruitless. There are no other sites. Consequently, the most crucial issue confronting us today is a decision on the ultimate reuse plan for Homestead Air Force Base.

That decision will effect whether or not this community will be able to accomodate the tremendous world-wind growth in aviation that is forecast, a growth that we will be

unable to meet with MIA and our other airports alone.

For example, as we reported in the SEIS, Opa-locka has air space and environmental issues. From an aviation point of view, the conclusion is inescapeable, we need Homestead. The need for a long-term capacity demand will not come at the expense of environmental incompatibility.

One of the Aviation Department's objectives is to provide aviation to meet demands while ensuring a balance between environmental issues, quality of life and economic issues for Florida residents.

The SEIS shows there are no environmental impacts associated with the airport alternative. Commercial aircraft is found to be less intrusive on the Everglades than those resulting from the military presence.

Miami-Dade County is committed to ensuring that the plan and development of the commerical airport in done in an environmental manner. This is not just words. Miami-Dade Aviation has a track

record of environmental responsibility. We've spent over one hundred and seventy million dollars since 1994 to address environmental issues. One of the main objectives of our current program is maintaining the environment not only of the air, but of the soil as well.

These are very real, very tangible statements to hear. The meaning is clear, that under the leadership of the County Commission and our County Manager, no one should fear the airport alternative. Miami-Dade Aviation is in full agreement with the activity proposed in the SEIS. The projected operations provide for future demands.

We believe that the airport is most compatible with the land use. Furthermore, advances in airplane and engine technology should be under consideration. We have commercial flight activity. This is evident in the mandatory conversion statement. This change was effective January 1, 2000. Another example of this type of technology change is increase in the use of flights of

the major air carriers.

In conclusion, we are at the crossroads as to the future of aviation in South Florida. This is our only opportunity to preserve a valuable airport, regional aviation, and allow this county to grow and prosper. Thank-you.

RAMON RASCO: Good evening members of the panel, my name is Ramon Rasco. I represent the developer selected by the county to build an airport at the former Homestead Air Force Base.

We've been working with the developer six years now. I'm here to confrim that the developer is committed to building a clean and environmentally-safe airport.

This commitment was spelled out in the Chapter 288 process that was started here in Miami-Dade County that was reviewed by all of the county's permitting and environmental regulatory agencies and was approved by the County Commission and went to the South Florida Water Management in West Palm Beach and was approved there. It went from there

to the Department of Community Affairs in Tallahassee and was approved there and then received unamimous approval by Governor Lawton Chiles and his cabinet.

This process resulted in tremendous environmental improvements for the base area business and its surroundings, including Biscayne Bay.

The same, however, cannot be said for the Collier proposal. They have not been before a single one of these bodies or agencies and their plan has not been reviewed by anyone of them.

All of the environmental safeguards that have been bought into the project by the Chapter 288 process have been agreed to by the developer and the developer hereby reaffirms its committment to its safeguards and to building an airport that will be compatible with our environment and community and national parks.

This project is an economic development opportunity for Dade County and particularly to the South Dade area where jobs are so badly needed and it will provde

the necessary airport capacity for our community to remain at the forefront of international trade and commerce well into the 21st Century.

The lease that was granted, my client, after intensive scrutiny and public hearings, feels is a very fair lease and inclusive lease that provides equity contracting and work opportunities for all segments of our community.

It is a lease that will bring millions of dollars of revenues to Dade County, that will provide for billions of dollars of facilities to be built at the airport which will then revert to Dade County at the end of the lease and which will provide for state of the art facilities for E-commerce, aircraft maintenance and repairs and many opportunities that will provide good high-paying jobs for our community and for our children and grandchildren.

The developer is committed to making this project a win-win situation for this community with a clean high-tech environmentally safe airport that will be

developed with all of the appropriate mitigation measures implemented as the project is built out in order to prevent damage to our national parks and to our environment.

In closing, I will say that the project presents opportunity and responsibility and is a tremendous opportunity for good jobs, for economic development and air transportation and it's balanced with responsibility toward our parks and our environment.

For these reasons, we urge the Air Force to dispose of this surplus property pursuant to the proposed action as spelled out in the Draft SEIS. Thank-you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: This concludes a presentation of information about the proposals. In a few minutes, we will begin the public comment portion of the hearing.

You will have several ways to provide your comments. If you brought written comments, please place them in the

box on the comment table out in the lobby. Written comments do carry the same weight as oral comments, which are presented here at the hearing.

If you want to write down your comments while you're here, there are forms on the comment table to do that. You can can take a form home to complete and mail it back to the address which is provided on the comment form.

You can also write your comments in your own format and mail them in. You do not need to use the comment forms; they are only provided for your convenience.

You will have the opportunity to provide oral comments when I begin the public comment portion of the hearing in just a couple of minutes.

Let me tell you a few things about the public comment period. I will say again, I said when we started, if you signed up last night or this afternoon, but did not get to speak and you want to speak tonight, you need to tell the lady in the purple dress outside by the back entrance doors there and she will

pull your cards and you will be the first group of people that will speak tonight

After those folks have spoken, we will hear from elected officials next and then we will hear from those of you who have submitted cards indicating that you wish to speak tonight. I will call on you in the order that the cards were submitted.

Anyone who has not yet filled out a card and wants to speak, will be given an opportunity to do that after the registered speakers have made their comments.

Each individual or organization will have three minutes to provide comments. You may finish your sentence when your time is up, but please don't take anymore time than that. Please stop promptly so we can hear from the maximum number of people.

Please refrain from applause or clapping, as that takes time away from the speakers. Please respect other peoples' viewpoints and let them make their comments without interruption.

Please clearly state your name and the name of your organization, if any, that

you're representing before you begin your comments so that our court reporter can get that down. The transcript that she prepares will be the permanent record of this hearing and will be published in the Final SEIS.

Please do not provide any personal information in your comments if you do not want to see it published in the Final SEIS. It's very important that you use the microphones there in the aisles so that the reporter can hear you and get down your comments.

The focus now is to listen to your comments concerning the content of the Draft SEIS. Preceding this presentation, you had an opportunity to ask questions, one-on-one, with the technical staff at the exhibits there at the back of room and hopefully they answered all your questions.

Any further questions that are asked in the course of making your statements, will be addressed in the Final SEIS rather than answered tonight. So again, please focus your comments on the Draft SEIS and the analysis of the reuse options.

If you need to have your comments translated into English and did not indicate when you signed in, please let us know. If you make comments tonight and later decide that you have additional comments or know someone who is interested in the comment process but could not attend any of the meetings, written comments can be submitted until March 7, 2000. The mailing address can be found in all all of the available hand-outs.

At this point, I'm going to start with the individuals who signed up last night but we didn't get to them and who have indicated that they are here tonight.

Let me start with Hector Varela.

000157 HECTOR VARELA: Colonel McShane and distinquished members, my name is Hector Varela. I'm an elected member of West Kendale Community Council. I thank you very much for giving us an opportunity to appear before you. I join the commentary from last night of Mayor Wallace and especially of Mayor Steve Shiver, elected officials, who

know the Homestead area best and who are cognizant of the need for jobs in South Miami-Dade County, which in the last Labor Department statistics was ranked dead last in employment.

We remain approximately 33 percent above the U.S. rate of 4.1 unemployment. There are deep pockets of property in Miami-Dade County. The commerical airport solution is the most viable and produces the best paying jobs. It keeps Miami-Dade County as a prominent site for commerical aviation, which we are constantly being assailed by other cities and counties in the United States.

I would join Director Dellapa in his concern that we're going to be marketed right out of this market. This is not going to be a catch-as-catch-can type of development.

I sit on the appeals board and it's pretty tough to develop anything. We will get tougher and tougher. This is not going to ruin the environment. And by golly, we really do need the jobs. I hope that I didn't go over my time. Thank-you, Colonel

and distinguished panel.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: I understand that a large number of folks are standing there in the back. There's a lot of chatter going on and it's distracting. Some of the folks in the back rows are unable to hear because you're talking like that. So please come in and sit down and listen to the speakers so that everybody has an opportunity to hear what is going on. Please don't be rude and distract other folks from hearing what is going on.

Next to speak will be Alan Farago.

000158 ALAN FARAGO: Thanks. Usually I don't need a mike to do this, but that's all right. First of all, my name is Alan Farago and I'm Conservation Chair for the Miami Sierra group.

I want to start by expressing our dismay at the conduct of the hearing last night with respect to the registration. We had a significant number of people who were unable to speak last night in opposition to

the commerical airport.

Just a couple of issues. First of all, thirty years ago, there was a proposal for a jet port in the Everglades. Miami-Dade County Aviation at the time said that the capacity of the Miami International was going to be exceeded and we needed the jet port in the Everglades then. That was thirty years ago.

We simply don't trust the officials that say with the additional fourth runway of Miami International, with changes in cargo and passenger freight loads, that a relief airport is needed at the present time.

With respect to the SEIS and the question of jobs, because jobs seem to be on everyone's mind here, 4.12 of the SEIS talks about jobs in the year 2005. Mixed-Use alternative will give approximately fifty-five hundred jobs as opposed to thirty-seven hundred jobs for the airport. I think people need to look at the SEIS a little more closer.

The earnings, in 2005, the SEIS under the Mixed-Use alternative, a hundred

and sixty million in earnings, as opposed to a hundred and five million for the airport. So we encourage you, please, to look as the SEIS closely. If it was only about jobs and if people wanted jobs now, you would consider the Mixed-Use alternative.

There is also the issue about the cost of the SEIS, how excessive it has been. In 1996, the City of Seattle wasted six million dollars on an SEIS prepared by the same consulting group that prepared the technical aviation part of this SEIS. Numbers come and go.

There are some very complicated issues with respect to the SEIS. The issue of airports and compatibility with our national parks, some of them have to do with things like noise.

The FAA and the Department of Interior have been at war over noise measurements for decades. And we propose and we suggest to people who are really concerned about jobs, if you think that this Homestead commerical airport is going to resolve the question of jobs created in Homestead, we

disagree strongly because we're talking about problems that have taken a long time to create and I honestly don't believe they're going to be resolved anytime soon.

So again, if you're interested in jobs, consider the Mixed-Use alternative.

A final point, we don't just represent Miami-Dade County county Airports are not compatible with national parks. Thank you very much

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next speaker will be Benoit Jonckheeve.

000159 BENOIT JONCKHEEVE: Thank-you. My name is Benoit Jonckheeve and I moved to Homestead in 1993. I was very surprised to see that you were very naive to believe information given to you about the plan of the airport, the belief that noise and pollution can be restrained and can be managed and it will be safe with so many airplanes flying near Turkey Point.

If some people thought about increasing jobs, increasing income for the

community or the future, I would like you to open your eyes to the future. What will be the future for the next generation if you accept the construction of an airport and In twenty-five, thirty years, the noise, the traffic, the pollution, the construction, the factories and warehouses it will be creating in South Florida, in Homestead between Biscayne and the Everglades National Park.

They propose to expand the airport to two, three or four runways. We have to be against the project, to preserve the parks, to preserve the quality of life left. Honestly, with all of the studies and proposals that you have, you make a decision to expand a big airport to a bigger airport.

You'll let the next generation, repair and find solutions of mistakes you will make today by accepting the construction of an airport. And finally, I'm against it because it's already off limits.

Please, do not be a hypocrite, go and think further about the future. Please, there are other economical and safe projections for the base and for our

community to be considered and to choose from. Renounce it before it's too late.

Ladies and gentlemen, be active. It's your voice against their noise. Thank-you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next speaker is Barry Patterson.

000160 BARRY PATTERSON: Good evening I'm Barry Patterson. I live in Key Largo in Monroe County. I'm a part of the audience that waited six hours last night to speak. A public meeting should have been held in the proposed impact area of the Upper Keys.

I'm representing the South Florida Chapter of the Earth Liberation Foundation. The conversion of the surplice of Homestead Air Force Base property to a commerical airport that abuts the Upper keys and that the proposed airport area is over a Florida designated area is of critical concern to us. We want to protect the Keys and not have the onslaught of commercial jet traffic.

The Florida Keys and South Florida is

a unique region with many endangered species. The Draft does not cover the question of living organisims, including humans. Will they survive in an unhealthy state with twenty-four hours a day of jet fuel droplets falling down from the clear South Florida skys?

The negative impact of a commercial airport between Biscayne and Everglades National Park and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the Key Largo National Wild Life Preserve will be a disgrace to American residents and in direct conflict with the purposes of establishing these priceless national parks.

We strongly disagree with the Draft SEIS that a commercial airport is needed as an incentive to boast local economy and provide jobs. In fact, Homestead had a prosperous economy before Hurricane Andrew.

As we can see, Homestead is experiencing a boom in residential homes, construction and growth of business and of tourism. What I'm saying to you, folks, I'm saying people that want to work, are working.

With the local Homestead economy in good health, it's become obvious that an airport development is pushed by a few people and politicians addicted to greed at the expense of the environment and Homestead's quality of life.

Therefore, we support the non-action alternative in the Draft SEIS which states the Federal Government retain ownership of the remaining acreage at the former Homestead Air Force Base and do nothing with this environmentally-sensitive land. Thank-you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next speaker will be John Fortuin. Followed by Debra Flynn.

000161 JOHN FORTUIN: Hello, my name is John Fortuin. I'm a resident of North Miami. I came here today to speak out in opposition to the conclusion written up in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement that an airport is needed in South Dade and is compatible with our plants and protects the environment.

This SEIS, although it had import from environmental agencies, was actually written by aviation consultants. If I wanted to go see a doctor, I wouldn't go to an aviation consultant nor to a butcher. And that's what I think is going to happen to our environment.

If we take these aviation consultants' words on the environmental, it will be butchery to Biscayne National Park, in particular, and extremely damaging to Everglades National Park.

I come to Homestead all the time and partake in eating and drinking in its restaurants on my way to Biscane National Park where I go snorkling and out to the Everglades where I ride bikes and spend time in the wilderness and enjoy watching the birds.

Many of the birds are endangered and will be considered threats to aviation. In many airports, bird control policies have been instituted. At one point, Miami International had plans to have people shoot the birds. This was squashed by a majority

the Audubon Society, along with some other environmental groups.

We need to project the environment. The environment brings in tourists from all over the world. I recall meeting people on South Beach who flew from Sweden during the time that the government was shut down and the parks were shut down.

These people were tourists. They traveled across the world to visit our treasure, Everglades National Park, and they weren't allowed to. We can't degrade our parks. We must protect them. And by doing so, we protect the economy.

We have a much greater future of economic well-being in Homestead than all of Dade County. We must stop this airport. There are alternatives that can looked at. But this airport is bad news. It was borne out of corruption, political corruption that emanated from Dade County with lobbists and commissioners. And something that was borne out of such a corrupt beginning must be given a proper burial. Thank-you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Debra Flynn. Following Debra Flynn will be Acie Franklin.

000162 DEBRA FLYNN: My name is Debra Flynn. I live in the historic Bush region of Southwest 208 street. My son's father, Neale Foster, Army, E-4, died in Germany, April 6, 1990, from negligence from army doctors, and they admitted to it.

My respect for the military is zero. A fat nothing. I now stand before you to look you in the eye and say I have no respect for you. I have no respect for the military. I have no respect for you. Help me to restore my faith in the military to make the correct decision.

I'm a American, born in Jackson Memorial Hospital, Miami, Florida, 1957. I'm a South Dade County high school graduate. I'm one of the few natives. I've lived in South Dade most all of my life. A lot of people used to say this was paradise. I beg to differ.

President Clinton, in his State of the Union address, January 27, 2000, raised

several issues, which I would like to comment on. Number one, people should have a chance to live their American dream. South Dade farmers have stood tall to feed our country during the winter months.

Please do not pollute our farmers with your fuel that's going to come down from those jets when they land at that airport.

Two, invest in farm land and conserve. The land under the flight paths are mostly farm land. How are you conserving farm land with a commerical airport which is sandwiched in between two national parks and farm land. How does the Federal Government intend on feeding this country during the winter months when jet fuel is discharged over our precious crops.

Three, open spaces. Instead of new development, open spaces. Open spaces do not need to be destroyed by pollution from discharged fuel or the existence of lights.

A commercial airport sandwiched between two national parks is not a gift to leave to our children or grandchildren or great-grandchildren. The gift we can give is

a paradise which I enjoy leaving to my children.

Does anyone of you remember seeing the gleam in a child's eye when they catch their first kettle of fish or first lobster during mini-season. It will enable us to carry on our local tradition and bring back paradise. Protect our environment. Thank-you.

000163 ACIE FRANKLIN: My name is Acie Franklin and I'm from Naranja. Naranja is the location of Homestead Air Force Base. It's in our neighborhood. The reason it was named Homestead Air Force Base is because the nearest city to the base was Homestead. But the base is actually located in Naranja. That's our neighborhood.

In 1992 after Andrew hit, over six hundred million dollars was brought into Dade County and our community. We did not see one red cent. We don't believe in the jobs. We have no faith in this talk about jobs.

The biggest should I say endangered species of Dade County is truth. That's the

endangered species. We have the Air Force's decision-making to select the group that's going to work with the community and Naranja employment. They're not saying what they're going to do, but I can guarantee in black and white what they're going to do. Thank-you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Jill Patterson. Followed by Elizabeth Tyre.

000164 JILL PATTERSON: My name is Jill Patterson and I live in Key Largo. It's my year-round home and has been for almost twenty years. I work in the construction industry. At last night's meeting, some Miami-Dade officials seemed to be clearly stating that this is their local issue. So I ask, why is the flight path over the Keys, over Monroe County? Where are the references to Monroe County in the SEIS?

If a new commercial airport can fly airplanes without going over Key, Biscayne the Everglades or Key Largo with its five endangered species, and the Upper Keys, then I have no issue. But it can't be done.

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The proposed commercial airport would impact us in the Keys. You did not give us an opportunity to be heard. We requested a public forum in the Keys.

This study has been described as state of the art. When I received my copy of this report and it made references to the City of Key Largo and descriptions of Islamarada being the largest development in Monroe County, both are glaring errors. And there was no reference to four or five endangered species in Key Largo.

As an environmental impact study, this hardly seemed worth reading. It's an inaccuracy of simple facts and admissions of endangered species.

We all know how eight long years ago Hurricane Andrew came. But people chose to move here even without the lure of the Air Force base and without the lure of a commerical airport.

I listened to many politicians last night with the promise of jobs with the new commerical airport, thirty-eight thousand promised jobs. But the truth is, neither the

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Air Force or Miami Dade officials can guarantee jobs to anyone who lives here. Jobs will be filled by more people moving to South Florida.

Our economy is sound and it's easy to be fooled into thinking this way. We need to feed the population of the future and no point in having thirty-eight thousand high-paying jobs when there's no food being produced to put on the table. And don't count on the airplanes to bring produce in from other countries, they'll be too busy feeding their homes.

I heard no reference made at last night's meeting and the politicians didn't recognize that this district also stretches south as far as Key West. I saw no reference to Kendall in either volume of the SEIS. Thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Elizabeth Tyre. And the next speaker will be Jerry Klingbiel.

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000165 ELIZABETH TYRE. Thank you, very much for letting me come up this evening. It was a very long wait last night. My name is Elizabeth Tyre. I live in Hartford Square, which is six hundred feet away from what used to be the military housing on the northside of the base.

I cannot tell you all of the stories that we had through the years after Andrew. But I can say that the Air Force and FAA and co-partners in the federal parks supported a revitalization and also had an obligation to protect our national parks.

I recently took two weeks to study the SEIS report and it does indeed contain an impact on Biscayne National Park. The environmental collition would have enough to file a lawsuit under the federal protection law of the endangered species listed on the USWS.

We need jobs desperately in South Dade. Page two, lines 31 through 36, the Mixed Alternative plan projected by Collier Resource Company is to be developed early and almost seventy percent complete by 2005.

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That is almost a direct quote.

The Hoover Environmental Group offers to attract tourists from other parts of Dade County because of a world class aquarium that will be there. The mixed alternative plan envisions jobs that have to do with research, education, technical and professional careers.

I'm here to voice my opinion that the Collier plan would not only get us started sooner, but that we will have a hope of jobs and tourism in South Dade. Thank you.

000166 JERRY KLINGBIEL: Good evening, my name is Jerry Klingbiel. I'm on the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club, an organization who wants to impose its will for clean water and fresh air on the masses.

With that said, I have some great concerns about the sprawl that is going to be associated with the airport. The area surrounding the proposed airport is all environmentally-sensitive land, agriculture. It's some of the best soil that we have in Dade County, a very unique soil. You can dig

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in it without breaking your shoulder. The sprawl as we can see took place around Miami International airport and other airports is devastating.

I have attended council hearings where people complain about sprawl congestion. This airport in this location, if you look at it, I mean, there's no place for it to go.

The sprawl will just encompass all of Homestead. I'm sure that's what the land owners in Homestead have in mind, all of the property being sold and being turned over. So the sprawl associated with the airport is a definite concern.

Another concern I have that I heard people touch upon, is that we're going to have international flights flying in and out of this airport and have flights coming into the heart of our agricultural and environmentally-sensitive land.

As we have seen in the past few weeks, South Dade has been devastated by the citrus canker which came into Miami. We also have the med fly. We have all types of

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things that are going to be coming right into the heart of our agricultural area.

I don't know, what would you propose to do, put all of the planes in quarantine and quarantine trucks and see if they contain some type of substance and if they can do incredible damage. Our psychic skills are going to be brought into play. We'll have no cure for it. One of our oldest plants is gone because of this.

Another concern I have is that there is a nuclear power plant right at the end of one of the runways. And we say to ourselves, well, you know, that's very unlikely. But it would only take a suicidal pilot to crash into it. Thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Every time you clap, that's more time between now and 11:00 o'clock that you don't get to talk.

Ralph Pearson followed by Alice Motes.

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000167 RALPH PEARSON: Thank you. Colonel, distinquished members of the panel and citizens of South Florida, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Ralph Pearson. I'm the Director of the Center for the Homeless, 82 Arrow Drive, Southwest 125th Avenue, on already converted land, operated by the community partnership for the homeless, a non-for-profit corporation in wonderfully constructed buildings on beautifully landscaped property.

I would like to say that I'm first of all proud to be a native of Dade County, proud to have served my country as an officer in the United States Army and proud to have served this country as a a Circuit Judge. But most of up all, I'm proud to be a member of a community that has been first in this nation that first taxed itself to provide for the poorest of the poor, the homeless in our community.

I'm here as a representative of the Center to express our desire to continue to work with our neighbors, whoever they may be, and with South Dade on impact issues

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associated with the homelessness in Miami-Dade County and particularly South Miami-Dade County. Those issues include economic development and the provision of jobs and job training for local residents, which include the homeless.

And in order for us to do this, we have had to join forces with numerous partners who share our common interests, many of whom I'm sure will express their views. Our mission is to reduce homelessness in South Miami-Dade County and to be good neighbors.

We support this community in its effort to bring meaningful jobs to South Miami-Dade County, including the problem with the homeless as we move them from homelessness to home ownership and from joblessness to employment. We trust the Air Force with input from this forum will make the right decision. Thank you, sir.

000168 ALICE MOTES: Good evening. You'll have to pardon my nervousness. I would just like to take a few moments if I could. If the

airport is built with the flight infrastructure their talking about, there will be planes every five minutes and the noise is incredible.

If you've ever been stuck in traffic by MIA, you've experienced the constant flights coming in and out. This traffic jam is all indicative of the infrastructure which often follows airports. That in and of itself will destroy the character of Homestead, which is a role model agricultural area.

It's an example of encroachment of development with its foot in the door, if you will, which will just, like I say, destroy the character of Homestead.

And I'm also concerned about the air pollution and water pollution because all jet fuel is a dirty with hydrocarbons which just impacts everything with the fuel discharge that everyone is talking about.

The ecosystem we have here, that's another one of my concerns, major reef and fisheries and such things as that. This airport would be so close to a national park,

it will take one plane to crash and put the fuel in the environment. Everything would be dumped in the water. Especially the hydrocarbons, they're tearing up the economy and environment, which I find a lot of people fail to make the connection between environment and economic ramifications if we destroy our water and our air and stuff like that.

A lot of my friends, they don't have the financial resources or the ability to get the training required for a lot of these jobs in the airport. And the SEIS, unfortunately, does not take into consideration the environmental impact of the jobs, that people bring all of their families and of course the development. Thank you. I apologize for my wavering voice.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next speaker is Armando Pomar. Patty Rabin signed up on the same card.

000169 ARMANDO POMAR: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Armando Pomar. I'm

the Florida State Director of Latin American Citizens. We have over a hundred and fifty thousand members in the state and we're the oldest Hispanic organization in existence in the United States of America. We started this cause for civil rights in Texas in 1929.

Very briefly, we're supporting the development of the airport. Like in Texas where we supported the Anti-Defamation League that was created, we're supporting the same in Homestead.

We are Americans. Afro-Americans and Hispanic Americans will be discriminated economically if we do not support this project. By the way, we do this under the United States and North America Freedom of Speech and we expect to go to Washington and we're going to go directly to the President of the United States.

One of the reasons, obviously, is the economic reason, and furthermore, thirty-eight thousand jobs. Thirty-eight thousand jobs can make a big difference in all of us here in this area of Miami.

Besides that, I've been here for

thirty years, and in thirty years we have not been able to recover from all of this economic disadvantage that we do have in this county.

So it's not that we do not appreciate our environment, we do love our environment, but we're going to have a very endangered species of Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans and Afro-Americans and others that are not going to be able to sustain themselves. Thank you, very much.

000358 PATTY RABIN: I was here last night. I had to leave because of my daughter, Brielle. I'm a native Floridian and so is she. I'm also a nursery owner in Homestead.

My husband and I are growers of orchids and bromeliads and have been doing this for twenty-five years. I respect very much my environment. I've lived here all my life. I've enjoyed Florida and Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park.

I'm against the airport for many reasons. One is that I like to live in an area that is a clean area. One of the

gentleman that spoke earlier tonight regarding the issues of the citrus canker and the med fly, these are issues that people don't seem to realize how important they are to South Dade and our agricultural area.

South Dade is one of the largest in the United States for winter crops. The nursery industry has now become the third largest industry in the State of Florida. I don't know if anybody realizes that, but it's a very powerful industry for the State of Florida.

And if the citrus industry is being hurt, than they have to do something else. By putting the airport in South Dade, you're going to hurt the environment. The damage that the airplanes are going to do is going to be monumental.

I have a six-year old daughter. I know a lot of people down here tonight have children. This thing is not for now, it's for the future, it's for the future of our children.

There were a lot of people here last night that I knew and I recognized from South

Dade that were pioneers of South Florida. Those people are probably not going to be around in ten years, but they were here last night and we're here again tonight to stop this airport.

I'm just a regular person. I work very hard for a living. I'm living the American dream. And I know that there is an important issue about jobs, but there's also another issue, that if the Collier-Hoover plan does get accepted, there will be other jobs. There won't be thirty-eight thousand jobs, but there will be other jobs.

The most important thing that we can do is to protect our environment and let there be a future for our children, because our children are the future of this country, not just South Florida, not just South Dade, they are the future. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: The last speaker from last night and earlier today is Alice Pena.

000170 ALICE PENA: My name is Alice Pena and I'm here today to support the Homestead commerical airport. We hear how lives are improved and about new technology in the future and good economic outlook.

We hear a lot these days about the prosperity we're all enjoying in America. We've far from it in this small community of Homestead. It's been eight years since Homestead suffered the worst devastation in history due to Hurricane Andrew.

Homestead Air Force Base was developed in the 30s. It had B47s, B52s, F100s. It had air traffic control facilities, freight terminals and everything that an Air Force base has.

A commercial airport is consistent with the historical land use. It will generate jobs and match the needs of Homestead and South Miami and our neighbors to the northeast and south.

Our employment figures lag behind the rest of the country. We lack services and infrastructure and our inner cities are in chaos. Here the land use is being

preserved, but preservation and quality of life is meaningless if we don't preserve honor and dignity for mankind and do that with good decent jobs for hard working people.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: I have three cards from elected officials. John Pettit is the first one. The next speaker after that will be Israel Andrews.

000171 JOHN PETTIT: How are you. I'm John Pettit with the Community Council. And that doesn't get me anywhere. I speaking as a realist. I just observe the obvious. I won't even go with the happy and healthy that was brought up. There's no guarantee of the environment or of income.

I was born and raised in Miami. Around Miami Airport there are three lakes. One got the name "Blue Lagoon" because it used to be blue. Now you can't put a boat in there. If you do, and I wouldn't anymore, if you have a white boat, it comes out with a big ring around it. And the water is not

blue at all. It used to be. I don't know why, but now it's brown.

And I just want to say, we don't need an airport here. There are many better alternatives. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Israel J, Andrews. Is he here. If not, we'll move on to the next one. Jose Luis Diaz. Is he here. Moving on. Jorge Vigil.

000172 JORGE VIGIL: Good evening distinguished panalists, my name is Jorge Vigil. I've been a life-long resident of Miami-Dade County. I'm speaking now in favor of the proposed redevelopment of Homestead Air Base as an airport.

I hold this position for two main reasons. Number one, the alternative multi-use plan, the Collier-Hoover plan, will make the base a public place held by private interests beholding to other private interests and accountable to no one but themselves.

And number two, the new airport

would be adequate for the next ten years. And without a good site, all of Miami-Dade County will ultimately suffer. And last, but not least, it will create tens of thousands of jobs for the economic improvement of Homestead and South Dade.

The only negative drawback is, of course, the environment and the impact of an airport on Everglades National Park and Biscayne National Park. On this issue, the SEIS seems to be dispositive.

I'm not a biologist, not an expert, but in my opinion, the study done by SEIS reflects an unbias, objective analysis of the impact of a commerical airport upon the surroundings.

The environment is important, but so is economic development. It maximizes the benefit that is brought to economic development. According to the SEIS, it will not cause a significant adverse environmental impact.

Simply put, it will maximize economic development with a minimum of environmental impact. This in my opinion is

necessary for Dade County to prosper into the 21st century. Thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next speaker is Bob Welsh.

000173 BOB WELSH: Thank you. The runway in Opa-locka is eight thousand feet long, one hundred and fifty feet wide. It will handle an L1011. It's not a thirty-mile drive to the middle of nowhere.

Please consider the environmental impact of thirty-eight thousand people driving say thirty miles south to Homestead versus say driving ten miles to Opa-locka.

I live in the approach pattern to MIA. The flights come in one every two minutes, but only during morning and evening rush hours. At Opa-locka, there are plenty of landing slots available during the off-peak hours. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next name is Pablo Ruiz. He will be followed by Luis Padron.

000174 PABLO RUIZ: Good evening and thank you. I do not pretend to comprehend all of the elements that cloud this issue. However, I know I would not like to turn Homestead Air Force Base into an airport. Unfortunately, there are many people who can't see the forest for the trees and are blind to the consequences which lie ahead.

To many, an airport is synonymous with jobs. I know many that don't agree with this. They fail to see or comprehend how an airport can improve the quality of life. We're told if you build it, jobs will come. They'll certainly come with a few at first, from Coral Gables and Miami and, yes, even from Hialeah. They will come so we are told.

But what we're not told is that when they leave each day, they'll take our money, our jobs, our businesses, our homes and quality of life with them.

This is not about jobs versus gators or trees nor is it about developer and environmental, this is about South Dade and the future of South Dade. It's about the residents of South Dade and their economy.

Elected officials sometimes forget who they work for. It would be the mayor who would stand to gain the most, along with his company. But Mr. Mayor, how would we handle what will follow long after you've gone? What will we say to those parents who will lose their children if a cargo plane should crash into Homestead Senior High? We must realize it's not a question of if it will happen, but a question of when it will happen.

How many sacrifices would this community have to endure so the rich of this county can become richer? Mr. Mayor, why aren't you here listening to the concerns of the people that you serve. It's time to remove the blindfold. It will not solve the problems in the community. It's a problem which this community should not be forced into.

Elected officials fail to listen to the people. Frankly, if this is the best plan you have for jump-starting the economy, you should spend your time visiting with Ellian. To have an airport in our community

will not provide jobs for the needy or increase the value of our property, it will congest our roads and degrade our quality of life by increasing noise and water pollution.

It will endanger the lives of our children and increase taxes and ultimately degrade the ability of our children to fish and play and just plain have fun. An airport in our community will destroy, not improve our neighborhood. Thank you.

000175 LUIS PADRON: It's important to recognize at these meetings, this is more than just a governmental body versus the environment, it's building companies who are prospering and making huge amounts of money.

The present officials have always given us an educational city, that does create a baseball team that's not a wasteball team The public does not want and doesn't have to have an airport. What is best for the land in question. The loyalty is to campaign contributions and mainly land developers.

Hialeah is a more effective version

of John Gotti and they spoke in favor of the airport last night. Did it strike anyone strange that the mayor of a city forty miles away should come down to Homestead to voice his opinion on this matter. Barely recognizable without his prison uniform, Mayor Martinez managed to speak before any resident of South Dade in order to give his blessings on an airport. Isn't that odd.

It is not Mayor Martinez and others who will make the ultimate decisions on this matter. I want to hear our local politicians.

These gentlemen do not understand the meaning of the word responsibility and these men are not to be trusted with the best interest of the public. In fact, they're the three stooges with their lack of management skills.

For the thirty-eight thousand jobs, how many of those jobs will be gone after the construction is finished. How many will pay $10 an hour. I remind those of you enchanted with that thought, eighty thousand in Miami are not working.

I urge the panelists to review the studies for the past two years, review the studies and make a comparison. Can they protect the environment and give us the quality of life they say they can. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: I apologize. Your card was misfiled. I know you were here earlier.

000176 SANDY JENSEN: My name is Sandy Jensen. I'm a native Miami. Do you have a video? Go ahead and play it, please.

(Thereupon, a video was shown)

A picture is worth a thousand words. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next speaker is Jonathan Goldman. Next will be Charles Monroe.

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000177 JONATHAN GOLDMAN: I'm Jonathan Goldman. I'm an environmentalist and I just have a few things to say. If you look at the longitude on the airport, it's the same longitude that covers the ecosystem, the irrigation, which is a system that the Keys and South Florida needs. Without it, there would be a depletion of water as well as the quality of life of the endangered species.

Under the Act of 1973, it makes a provision for the protection of the environment and such birds as the Woodstock and the Capback and Seakite sparrow.

The Homestead airport would be directly over a South Florida ecological treasure and there are alternatives that can be found that support the Homestead economy.

We have to live with our decision much longer than you do. Please do not condemn South Florida by constructing Homestead Airport. Thank you.

000178 CHARLES MONROE: Good evening, I'm Charles Monroe. I can only represent myself. I believe that I'm environmentally sound in

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that I can't understand how anyone could at all believe that producing an international airport 1.5 miles within a national park would cause no effect at all.

I understand that people in Homestead require economic structure and help, but I realize and I'm concerned that they will not get this from this airport.

I live in Miami Springs, which is an airport community. And I know when an airport comes, the neighborhood comes with it. The jobs that are spoken of over and over in these hearings are jobs that will go to skilled technicians and people who have been trained by the companies that intend to run this airport.

Administrators and mechanic technicians of all sorts will come to this county. In fact, the people of this county, if they can get work at the airport, will get minimum wage dead-end jobs, which is exactly what they're fighting against.

The people who are telling them that they will get these jobs happen to be the local government of Miami-Dade County and

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that really doesn't surprise me. There is corruption in our town, believe it or not, and we cannot get rid of it with this lurking over our heads. We ask that you remove this threat, otherwise we will never be able to remove what infects our bodies and our souls.

These people are desperate, but desperate for a reason. Eight years ago a hurricane distroyed their economy. Why in eight years have they not been supported by the county. Why are they told it's the environmental facilities that you don't have jobs and you have no livelihood. Why is it that this is even happening at all.

They have the idea they're going to bring in this incredible major airport that gives everyone that needs a job, a job. They've told that to the people. This is a hallucination, it's a farce, they won't get the jobs.

What concerns me as much as damage to these national parks, is that these people have been chosen as an army to impose environmental elements on this issue that otherwise would be seen as commonsense.

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Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: James Marshall. To be followed by Sean Santani.

000179 JAMES MARSHALL: Good evening Colonel McShane and your staff. I appreciate you're giving me a chance to speak before you.

I'm retired from the United States Army and I'm a disabled veteran. I'm also president of the Richmond Heights Homeowners Association for the last six years. I would like to bring you up to date about the disruption of Homestead Air Force Base due to nature. If you go back in history since 1930, we had some hurricanes in this area. We had destruction, but we came back up with Homestead Air Force Base.

Now, let me tell you something here that would be tremendously important to the public. Homestead Air Base was a supply line for the Desert Storm War and Bosnia and Kozavo. They're doing it now. We don't want to let our guard down because we need to be a

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nation of defense.

You know, in a nation like ours today, we have three things that we have to be very careful about; you have defense, you have humanity and support, and you have a staging ground just in case of war.

Ladies and gentlemen, there's still a communistic type of factor here in Dade County. We have had numerous scares. We're still in a war situation in Dade County and the United States.

I spent time in occupational Japan in 1949 with a scaled-down military force. We just got lucky to go into Korea in 1950 to fight the communists and to defeat them. And later on, I fought the communist Chinese, hand-to-hand.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm a living example of history and I'm here to testify for all of the people and to make this a better country. I hope that the community goes back and reassess their values for the Homestead Airport so that we can have jobs and the economic system will be stable. The environment will also be protected because we

did it in the beginning. Thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Sean Santani. Moving on to Grant Livingston.

000180 GRANT LIVINGSTON: I'm got going to say too much, but I'm going to sing for you a little bit. You might know this from the original, "Leaving on a Jet Plane" written by John Denver. I don't think he would mind if we borrow it from him.

(Singing) There's the Everglades, a river of grass, Biscayne Bay, a sea of grass, they want to put an airport in between. Just a little airport so they say but little things have a way of getting bigger, you know what that means.

This airport is going to be another MIA you see, hold on now we've got to let them know, that we don't need no jet plane between The Keys and Everglades, this airport's got to go. All those promises we heard them make and all of those vows we

heard them take, I'll tell you now, they don't mean a thing.

Every place you go, there's an urban sprawl, stop it now before they take it all. Stop it now so we don't have to sing.

This airport is going to be another MIA you see, hold on now, we've got to let them know, that we don't need no jet planes between The Keys and Everglades. We don't need no jet planes between The Keys and Everglades. We don't need no jet planes between The Keys and Everglades. This airport's got to go.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next speaker is Paul Schwiep.

000181 PAUL J. SCHWIEP: I was going to begin by saying the famous quote that silence is the only voice of our God, but that was some nice voices, too. I urge you to stop. Do not do this. Do not transfer the air base to Miami-Dade County. Miami-Dade County can't be trusted.

I want to begin by responding to

this speaker that began the presentation from the airport, Mr. Dallapa. I don't know if he's here any longer. With all due respect to him, I was just astounded to hear him praise Miami International Airport's environmental record, for we who live here know that Miami International Airport, which is run by the Miami-Dade County Aviation Department, is an environmental nightmare.

They've spent millions of dollars on environmental evaluation because they've been ordered to. They created the problems that they have. Moreover, economically, Miami International Airport is a cesspool of procedure broken every day. We read in our papers, one fiasco after another. They can't be trusted to run the airport.

I was also interested to hear the attorney who got up and made a presentation. One of the criticisms of the Collier plan was that they would turn over public property to a private entity.

What has happened here is an entity that received a private backdoor, no-bid deal swung by the lobbyists, many of the lobbyists

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I've seen here today, and then given to a private company. Millions of dollars is at stake. We understand that. Millions of dollars that justifies the highest paying lobbyists, the silk-stocking lawyers, the best in the world. But I challenge them to disclose who owns the company, who is paying for these fees, who have they hired to run this campaign.

With respect to the SEIS, I would urge you to read the things that the SEIS discusses, the analyses that it makes. It doesn't square with the conclusions that it reaches.

Two hundred and thirty-one thousand flights a year, one hundred and five flights a day. A flight every three minutes. Two thousand to four thousand feet above the Visitors Center for the park. It just doesn't make sense.

It's not possible to have a Vistor's Center where the ground is rumbling under your feet by flights every three minutes. Three point nine million passengers annually. It just doesn't make sense and it's not

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consistent with regards to jobs. Again, read the SEIS. Thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next up is Sara Gomez and she needs a translator.

000182 SARA GOMEZ: (Through Juan E. Gandara, Sr., professional interpreter)

Good everying. My name is Sara Gomez and I'm going to be brief. I would like to say that I'm in agreement with the development of the airport in Homestead because of the new jobs, which would be beneficial for our community. Thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Andrew Delrio. To be followed by Mark Kraus. Do we have Andrew Delrio? Next is Mark Craus.

000183 MARK CRAUS: My name is Mark Craus. I represent the Audubon Society of Florida. I'm also a Dade County resident. I had originally wanted to speak to you about factual issues of SEIS, but there's one issue

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I would like to bring up that I think needs to be brought to light.

When the lawyer discussed the planning process, the county process and all of the planning that went into the proposal, there was an implication that's all of the planning that can be done. What he failed to tell you, the entire process was thrown out by the state courts

Having said that, I would like to point out that the airport is heavy industrial. I've sat through several of these meetings now and I heard earlier that they were going to make a green airport? Heavy industrial and green, that's not normal. It can't be done.

So the Audubon Society of Florida is against the airport. We feel there are several other options that would be more appropriate for this site, Mixed-Use being high on our list. Although we support Mixed-Use, high-tech clean industry type of development, there are several things that still have to be considered with that type of development.

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Number one, secondary and cumulative impacts have to be seriously considered. There needs to be equitable economic opportunities across the board. Economic opportunities must exist for all.

There must be good transportation planning. That site is remote. It has no rail. It has no good road infrastructure. And that has to be seriously considered.

I'm sorry, heavy industrial along Biscayne National Park is not eco-tourism. Infrastructure will cost and add billions of dollars of infrastructure costs to the residents of Dade County.

Open space has to be considered critical and must be considered. A year ago, there was a permit application that killed birds and now we're talking about a major airport. How many species are we going to destroy? I see my time is just about up. I would just like to make a statement that in South Florida, the environment is the economy, an airport is not the enconomy. Thank you.

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000184 CONNIE WASHBURN: Good evening, I'm Connie Washburn. I'm a teacher in Dade County Public Schools and I was a founder of a childrens environmental group called Young Friends of the Everglades.

I'm here representing them tonight and with your permission, I would like them to stand and face the audience so you can see the boys and girls. Will you do that so they can see the children. Thank you.

I hope that many of them get a chance to speak. They have a lot of good, well thought out things to say, as many other people have said here tonight. They brought up many points that I'm not going to go over, but I would like to make a proposal. I guess it's because I'm a teacher.

When children say something is right, that they have the right answer, I ask them to prove it. If they says it's right for us to have this airport to create all of these so-called jobs, I would like them to virtually prove it.

I would them like to see one hour of time where fifty plus large planes fly over

the Howard Drive area, the Pinecrest area and Coral Reef area and down through Naranja into Homestead, take-off and land in a period of an hour and for us to virtually understand what that would really be like.

I heard someone say tonight that the SEIS found no evidence of pollution. Just today, one of the children in my class, I teach 4th grade, said even a ten-year old child can name the problems of the pollution from the airport. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Shelby Reyes.

000185 SHELBY REYES: Hello, my name is Shelby Reyes. I'm in elementary school and I'm a member of Young Friends of the Everglades.

The Homestead Airforce base is no longer useable. I think that the best use of the land of the airport is a wetland aquarium or a golf course. And I'll explain why I think it should be built.

My first reason is, the wetland

aquarium is more educational. You can learn about different kinds of animals and wild life. My second reason is, since there is a closed aquarium, it is safe. Finally, the building will be environmentally safe when it rains.

There will be no air pollution coming into the building and the animals will be safe from harm and live peacefully. That's what I think should be built for the children. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Jaime Reyes.

000186 JAIME REYES: My name is Jaime Reyes. I'm an official for South Florida Council 15, which is a local immigrant group. There are three issues I want to bring up. I'm not sure if they're part of the SEIS plan or not.

Number one is the community of South Dade for the last twenty-five years has been fighting a lot of environmental issues. When you look at this plan as a whole, you've got to look at it as it relates to what we have as environmental problems. And number one is

we have what we call a Mount Trashmore that's located in South Florida.

For three to five years, the community fought long and hard because there was some leaking that was going into the well water or underground water system.

The county convinced the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of the Interior to agree to resolve that problem. It was a very expensive problem. That had to build a seventy-five foot trench to deal with that problem.

The second issue, there's an old South Dade land fill that sits next to Mount Trashmore. It's going to be at least a hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty million dollars just to clean that up within the next fifteen to twenty years. It's in the county budget. If you get a chance, please look at it. There's going to be a lot of money spent to resolve that problem, hopefully resolve it.

The third issue, which I hope we have the county official come to our meeting, they're having problems with the sewer

ingestion wells that sit next to the land fill, which is adjacent to it.

And the EPA has already sided up with the county on it and told the county they will not permit any additional sewer injection wells. That will resolve what they think might be happening, such as the percolating of the sewage back up from the system, which is a mile deep.

These are some of the issues that need to be resolved. Those need to be reviewed as a whole as relates to the entire SEIS plan and the impact its going to have on the community.

Lastly, I just want to say this whole process has been faulted from the beginning. In the corporate world and private sector, when you have a problem that's been faulted from the beginning, you throw out the process and start over. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Jennifer Gobie.

000187 JENNIFER GOBIE: Good evening, my name is Jennifer Gobie and I'm a 4th grader. I'm a member of the Young Friends of the Everglades.

My choice out of the four proposals is for the wetland aquarium. Number one, the Wetland crane, think about it, from about one thousand, there's around twenty-eight left. Number two, it will help you and me because of the food chain. Forget about the three other proposals.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Excuse me, you need to step a little closer to the microphone so the court reporter can hear you.

JENNIFER GOBIE: The airport, number one, the fuel and exhaust could run down into the soil and, number two, the planes will fly over three schools and interrupt them two times an hour, which means the planes will fly over and disturb one thousand kids every hour. Three hundred and ten planes will fly over any given school.

I want to tell you about my sister, who is former member of the Young Friends of the Everglades and she has writen a poem that was published in this book. I will now read you this.

Concern for our earth. Throughout the Dade County woods and trees, we still have concern for our earth. In December in the pines, we still have a concern for our earth. In the woody forest and the rain forest until we reach the mountains, we still have concern for our earth. With the trees and flowers all over, we still have concern for our earth.

The earth is ours. We have to protect and take care of it forever. So don't let anyone destroy it. So what is your choice? Thank you.

000188 NATALIE GILES-KLEIN: Hello and good evening, my name is Natalie Giles-Klein. I'm here to tell you what is the right decision to make. There are four things people are willing to build. The four proposals, one, an airport, two, a golf course, three, a

wetland aquarium, four, a spaceport.

I can't imagine everything being so crowded it would ruin our environment. You must know what I'm trying to tell you. Don't build the airport. Let's see, you want fifty-two airplanes screaming in your ear an hour. I don't think so. Who needs it. We have plenty of airports, including Miami Airport and we do not need any more airports and that's a fact.

First, I have plenty of friends who play golf and they don't need another golf course. Who needs it. All you golfers out there, I'm sure with two golf courses, you don't need anymore. The golf courses use so much fertilizer it poisons everything.

Last, but not least, we have the spaceport. I hope you make the right decision on all of this stuff, because it's a lot of trouble. Just think about it. And while you're doing that, think about other people. Most of all, think about animals, because it can save a lot of animals. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Jose Romero, III.

000189 JOSE ROMERO, III: Hello. I'm here to speak for the environment, the biological outlook of this. These commerical planes have provided for the environment, carbon dioxide, which helps us with our plants, which gives us the air to breath. This helps our environment. But of course they missed seeing this.

I'm sure that many of the people here in one way or other, drive in an automobile, and that consumes gasoline which releases carbon monoxide, which hurts our ecosystem. They complain about planes that are going to hurt it, but don't look at the cars they're driving every day.

Most of all, the planes that use the gas do not pollute, they actually enrich our environment. We cannot isolate ourselves from the rest of the world and not hide by our agriculture forever. We must adapt to the changes.

Many people will always be resistant

to change, but it's until the change is done that you realize it's important. The noise level that many people complain about is the difference of ten decibels. On the map up there, it shows it in red. But in actuality, ten decibels is nothing more than a soft whisper in a quiet room or a quiet office.

Lastly, Homestead is like a child with great potential. But it's not until we give it wings that it will fly. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Michael Beharry. Following him will be Elizabeth Kraus.

000190 MICHAEL BEHARRY: My name is Michael Beharry. Good evening everybody. Here are my proposals not to build the airport in the Everglades.

One, that the Everglades is a place for the animals like the Florida panther. The Florida panther is an endangered species. There's thirty of them left. It's like the last candy bar on earth. That's it. By-by. Right down the drain. Just like that. That

will be the same with the Everglades if we don't protect it. My children and grandchildren will never see this animal.

Lastly, our supply of water would go down the drain. Help save the Everglades. Thank you, very much.

000191 ELIZABETH KRAUS: My name is Elizabeth Kraus. I go to Howard Drive Elementary School and part of the Young Friends of the Everglades. I have ideas for the Homestead Air Force Base. I think the best use of the land is the wetland equarium because the airport and spaceport would cause air pollution and earth pollution. It causes noise and I would not want to hear fifty-two planes come in and out of the airport every hour.

The golf course ruins grass and other plants with people standing on it. The aquarium doesn't destroy animals' homes and cause noise. It doesn't pollute the environment. Everyone will be happy in some way. And the animals will have food and enjoy life, where all human beings can watch

the beautiful animals.

That's my idea for the Air Force Base. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next name I have is Pablo Lewis. It has a different address from the Pablo Lewis I called earlier. Do we have another Pablo Lewis? Moving on. Carl Hayes.

000192 CARL HAYES: Good evening and thank-you for the opportunity for us to be able to speak on this. I would like to point out that I'm not against jobs, I'm for jobs And there are alternative proposals out there that speak to that issue.

We're not faced here with a situation where we either have an airport or we don't have any jobs. That's not an issue. We have other industries in Florida as someone pointed out earlier. Tourism and the environment is one of our major industries.

I think the Mixed Plan, proposals like that, address both of these issues. I'm concerned when I hear things like Miami

Airport expansion, that type of thing. It's sort of alludes to the fact that it's sort of a master plan, that we're determining a master plan when we determine issues like this. That's how master plans seem to be deemed in Dade County.

I think as far as the airport is concerned, we need to consider that as a separate issue. We need to learn how to manage the airport that we have and learn how to manage the land use that we're looking at right now in the Homestead area. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: I would call on Edwin Lewis as the next speaker. Is Edwin Lewis here? Passing Edwin Lewis. Carlos Mora.

000193 CARLOS MORA: Good evening everyone, my name is Carlos Mora. I want to thank you all for the opportunity to express myself against the airport alternative.

Approximately seven thousand years ago, man declared war on nature. Everywhere we went, we devastated the environment. And

all of this happened because we saw and continue to see nature and each other as separate.

There is a universal truth, and that is that we are one, we are not separate from each other and we are not separate from nature. Every time we destroy nature, we destroy a part of us. We're a green and blue spaceship traveling in space, planet earth. Every time we destroy nature, we're destroying our own ship. And you can imagine what will happen when we finish with it.

So let us stop this process, let us start right now by rejecting the building of a commerical airport at the Air Force base.

Lack of jobs is not the problem in South Florida, it's the lack of honesty, compassion and love. We need compassion and love for each other and for the environment.

I would like to invite any of you that wants to find out more how closely connected we are with each other and nature to read the book called The Last Hours of Sunlight written by Tom Hartman and Friendship with God by Neale Walsh. Thank

you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next is Katharine Horn. And then Brittany Aaron

000194 KATHARINE HORN: My name is Catherine Horn.

000195 BRITTANY AARON: And my name is Brittany Aaron. We're from Howard Drive Elementary and we're a part of Young Friends of the Everglades. We would like to tell you four reasons to save the Florida Everglades and not have the airport. One, the Florida Everglades is the only one in the world.

KATHARINE HORN: Two, if the airport is built, the animals will all die or leave

BRITTANY AARON: Three, save the Everglades to let your children experience it

KATHARINE HORN: Four, it will take up a lot of space.

BRITTANY AARON: Five, less oxygen means less trees.

KATHARINE HORN: Six, birds will have to find a different place to go for the winter.

BRITTANY AARON: Seven, our drinking water would not be as good.

KATHARINE HORN: Eight, we would feel sad if the airport was built because f the Everglades would be destroyed.

BRITTANY AARON: Nine, the planes would go over while we're trying to work which would be fifty-two airplanes an hour.

KATHARINE HORN: Ten, the Florida Everglades is a national treasure.

BRITTANY AARON: Eleven, the airport will ruin the Everglades with noise and air pollution.

KATHARINE HORN: Twelve, there are already some animals that are almost extinct. We ask for your cooperation and time.

BRITTANY AARON: Please help us kids save a beautiful Everglades. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next is Danielle Kean.

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000196 DANIELLE KEAN: I'm Danielle Kean and I'm a member of Young Friends of the Everglades. We want to save the Everglades. When you save the Everglades, it's like you're saving the animals and yourself.

We want to save the Everglades so our children and grandchildren will see the joy of the animals. We, the students of Howard Drive Elementary, want to save the Everglades.

If they build an airport, the pollution will kill and destroy the joy of the animals. The Everglades is only one like in the world. Please save it before it gets destroyed. Also, there are thirty panthers left in the world, please save them.

The Everglades is where all of the animals go. It's where the animals trust will be safe. We would have less clean air. It's a national treasure. Plus, our drinking water would not be as good and safe.

Ladies and gentlemen, please listen to us Young Friends of the Everglades from Howard Drive Elementary and students also from The Keys. Save the Everglades.

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JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: I found a couple of young ladies who intended to mark their cards that they wanted to speak, but they didn't. But we have retrieved those and I'll call on Danielle Mendola at this time. Who is that with you?

000197 DANIELLE MENDOLA: My name is Danielle Mendola. I'm from Howard Drive Elementary and Young Friends of the Everglades.

000198 ESTEFANIA HAGEMAN: My name is Estefania Hageman and I'm from Howard Drive Elementary and Friends of the Everglades

DANIELLE MENDOLA: Ladies and gentlemen, we should save the Everglades because there is only one Everglades in the whole entire world.

ESTEFANIA HAGEMAN: If the airport is built, it will kill the animals and we won't have any more animals.

DANIELLE MENDOLA: It's just like killing ourselves.

ESTEFANIA HAGEMAN: God made the animals for a reason, not to kill them.

DANIELLE MENDOLA: If all the plants die, we won't have clean air and no one would want smelly air with planes passing by all the time.

ESTEFANIA HAGEMAN: So save the Everglades because kids want their children to see the treasure of the Everglades.

DANIELLE MENDOLA: Don't pollute to give people jobs. Save the Everglades.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next is Julio Majavier. He left? Thank you.

Robert Myerberg. Is Robert Myerberg here. Andrew Delrio, I think I called his name before and he wasn't here then. I think it's a duplicate card. Susan Epler, I know she's here.

000199 SUSAN EPLER: MY name is Susan Epler. It's very hard to come after such elequent speakers and to be speaking towards the end of the evening. I want to let you know I'm a registered nurse. I'm also, a member of this county and I certainly urge that the Air Force not turn Homestead Airport

Base over to a commercial jetport. When we built an airport next to Yellowstone, I think it's a very similar thing that would be happening here. We would be putting something that is so commerical in between two very independent eco systems.

I urge strongly that the area is developed in a manner that is more friendly to the environment and will still create jobs because it's true that it's an area that needs jobs.

So I urge you, again, do not build a commercial airport. Thank-you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Raquel Vargas.

000200 RAQUEL VARGAS: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. My name is Raquel Vargas.

000359 ANA MARIA GUTIERREZ: And my name is Ana Maria Gutierrez.

RAQUEL VARGAS: We're here to express our reasons why we shouldn't build an airport in the Everglades.

ANA MARIA GUTIERREZ: One, The

Everglades is important to us because in the Everglades almost all the animals are extinct. There are only about thirty panthers left.

RAQUEL VARGAS: Two, the Everglades is the last home for the birds and panthers and alligators and snakes.

ANA MARIA GUTIERREZ: Number three, water from the Everglades is water we use and is important.

RAQUEL VARGAS: Four, the trees in the Everglades will be be cut down to make homes.

ANA MARIA GUTIERREZ: Number five, the animals are safe and comfortable where they are.

RAQUEL VARGAS: Six, also there will be less vegetation which means less clean air to breathe.

ANA MARIA GUTIERREZ: Number seven, in the Everglades, the pollution --

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: You have to speak up into the microphone.

ANA MARIA GUTIERREZ: If you put an airport in the Everglades, the air pollution could kill the animals.

RAQUEL VARGAS: Eight, our children and grandchildren will not be able to see the Everglades. The airport will destroy it.

ANA MARIA GUTIERREZ: Our hope is that our words will make a difference. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Edwardo Alonzo. I don't see him. Next card is a duplicate from Shelby Reyes. Joe Nagenast.

000201 JOE NAGENGAST: Good evening. My name is Joe Nagengast. I've lived in Homestead for twenty years. I went last night to the meeting and you could have sold tickets to that, to listen to the mayors line up. All of them, they all sounded the same. All they did was push this for jobs, jobs.

There is an alternate that will give us jobs and not give us an airport. We don't need the pollution that's going to be dumped on us from the airport. Today, my wife and I

went out and listened to the F16s come in. They're not as loud.

Then we took a drive and went up to Miami International. The sound is totally different up there. You can hardly hear. The person that talked about the lake, we stopped by it and you can't see but a few inches down into the lake. There's a sheen of oil that's on that lake. Nobody goes in that lake hardly anymore with their boats.

We have lakes all around Homestead Airport Base. We have canals and Biscayne Bay. If they build an airport out there, our lakes are going to look the same. We have an opportunity to build something that's environmentally safe and clean in the county and will bring tourists. Give them a shot at it, not this airport. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Jill Patterson. Is Jill Patterson here. Apparently not. Jeffrey Roth. Jeffrey Roth. Dennis Gomez. Let me call on Norba Alonzo. Norba Alonzo. Edwardo Diorion. Who's coming?

000202 DENNIS GOMEZ: Dennis Gomez. I'm in favor of the airport. It has a lot of jobs and, personally, I want a way to get a job and I want to say here in Miami, my home town.

I just feel that Homestead Airport will provide a lot of jobs for kids my age, kids going to school now. That want to stay in Miami to get jobs, they don't want to go away and leave their family. They always want to stay with their family.

I think the airport would be a good idea and bring a lot of new jobs for students. I think the airport is a great idea.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: I'll try again. Edwardo Diorion. Suzette Rice.

000203 SUZETTE RICE: Good evening, I'm here tonight for this hearing and I'll tell you, I've been in the county for years doing zoning hearings and I understand the development from both sides.

Today, I decided to address the

issue of jobs from a curiosity standpoint and I called the Miami-Dade Aviation Department and I found out that MIA has approximately thirty-five thousand jobs on-site. Which really was interesting to me because they're claiming the Homestead Airport will provide thirty-eight thousand jobs.

It made me wonder how big they're planning to make that airport. I believe in the Collier-Hoover plan and it's basically because I believe that it up-lifts the community.

Homestead has an image problem within itself. People always seem to apologize for being in Homestead. I worked down there, I know they did. It's a beautiful community. The parks are just incredible. And a Mixed-Use plan would change the community. It would make it more alive than it is.

I think that an airport is a dirty, nasty facility. I grew up the daughter of life-long Pan Am pilot and I spent a lot of time in MIA. This week I went out and rode around the airport again to make sure my

impressions were right. And it is dirty. It still hasn't changed.

The reason that I'm here is for Harry. Harry was a government employee out of Washington. He spent twenty-five years with the Department of Interior. He's my father-in-law -- or was my father-in-law. He was the gentleman who helped fight the jetport out in the Everglades and he spent the last five years of his career dealing with the jetport.

And I think as a daughter-in-law of a man who put so much into the Everglades, I would be amiss not to stand here and say that whatever was going to happen with the jetport hasn't changed and it's going to have the same affect on the Everglades and Biscayne National Park as it did back in the '60s when he fought.

In the building of South Dade, I want the footprints to be something I can be proud of myself. For Harry, thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Jeff Knight. Jeff Knight here. Apparently not. Kevin Gonzalez. Kevin Gonzalez. Hector Hernandez. Richard Raboff. Steven Sabage. Luis Casas.

000204 LUIS CASAS: Hello everybody, my name is Luis Casas. I've lived in Dade County for a long, long time. And I came here tonight to say that nothing is better for Homestead citizens than bringing the airport here.

I agree, one hundred percent, to make the airport in Homestead. It's really good for Homestead to put the airport there.

I've speaking because I came here in 1958. When I came here, the Miami Airport was there and I worked there every day and could see many types of animals close to airport.

I heard here tonight the people talking about animals. Nothing happened with the animals. Animals live together with their species. When you go to the Keys, you can see the Egrets go close to the car and the Egrets don't worry about the car, they

don't worry about the airplanes. The Egrets and other animals live together with us.

The Wetlands is not far away from Miami Airport. You can see plenty of animals there in good health. So nothing happened with them and nothing happened with the water.

Engineers know about everything, they know that they can construct an airport here and don't damage anything. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Robby Tovar. Robby Tobar. Marian Basesis. Marian Basesis. Paul Dean. Paul Dean. Cindy Hewitt.

000205 CINDY HEWITT: Good evening. I want to give you all a warm congratulations for your tenacity of hanging out here tonight this long. I'm Cindy Hewitt and like many speakers before me, I take an extremely skeptical look at the accuracy of the SEIS, as well as this entire process.

While I live in the congested area of Dade County, I treasure the natural

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beautiful of this land, Biscayne National Park and the Everglades and the Upper Keys.

A commerical airport will seriously degrade these resources and will not provide sustainable economic growth of this area. My choice would be the No-Action option. However, I believe the Collier-Hoover plan is an acceptable alternative that will provide sustainable growth as well as reasonable environmental protection. I strongly oppose the development of a commerical airport and believe there are much better alternatives.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Kenneth Smith.

000206 KENNETH SMITH: Good evening. My name is Ken Smith and I've lived in Dade County since about 1982. I've enjoyed a lot of the national parks, but I'm not sure that my enjoyment of the national parks is really the issue here.

I'm a businessman and took time out of my day to be here. Nobody paid me to come here. I came here because I believe that my

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involvement in the process of the United States goes beyond the size of campaign contributions.

As a businessman, I think we need to look at all of the factors involved in this thing. And we have a long set of environmental impact statements that obviously I couldn't even come close and I'm not going to try to do that in three minutes.

But there were a few things I was looking at. We've got some major industries in Dade County; tourism, nurseries and agricultural. People talk about this airport bringing us thirty-eight thousand jobs. We've got a lot more jobs in tourism and nurseries and agricultural than those thirty-eight thousand.

People come to Dade County as tourists to see what we have. And if we destroy it, they'll stop coming and that will cost a lot more. If we destroy the environment and lose our nurseries and lose our agriculture, if we dump jetport fuel in the drinking water, we'll have to pay for our drinking water and that will cost us more.

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I don't think there will be long-term jobs. When the construction of the airport is gone, we'll have people cleaning laboratories and they'll be poor. The big jobs, the other jobs, will be skilled and they'll look to people who don't live in Dade County. Because I haven't heard anything about people who do all the work on the jetport planes if there's going to be repairs. I haven't heard anything about that.

We talked about jobs in Dade County, big things that have been given to us. We've got four arenas and basketball stadiums and everything else. People got jobs who are ushers and selling beer in the stands. We've got problems here. We've got congestion of the schools and this doesn't address any of that.

I'm against the airport project. I don't think it does anything for us. I don't think it's going to be beneficial to the future of Dade County or the people of South Dade or the people of Homestead.

God gave man stewardship over the

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planet and that's not only fun, it's responsibility.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Paul Czekanski.

000207 PAUL CZEKANSKI: Good evening. My name is Paul Czekanski. I'll try not to reiterate too much. I'm a person that moved to South Dade from New Jersey about eleven years ago.

And one of the things why I really made the move to South Dade was the fact that it was a more rural suburban natural type of area to live in. I didn't really want to live in a crowded city or an overgrown area, I wanted to live in the South Florida area. I believe that's what Dade County has capitalized on and we should not destroy it.

Dade County has capitalized on the ecosystem and the natural parks and natural activities. If you look at Florida City, Florida City has seized on its opportunity as the gateway to the keys, developing the area of US-1 as a gateway to The Keys and

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promoting something that's in sync with what this area is.

I find it insulting that this project is being pushed by many people that don't live in this part of the county, by politicians. Mayor Martinez was here last night. What the hell was he doing down here? He doesn't live here. What's his stake in this?

The fact is that the process has been marred from the beginning with the back-door awarding of this contract. As was mentioned earlier, that contract should have been scrapped right up front.

Nobody is going against the opportunity of jobs here, but it doesn't have to happen in the form of a big heavy industrial airport. Other proposals will create jobs. And in addition to those jobs, there will be a labor development that's more friendly.

Someone else mentioned the technology of an airport. I don't see how it fits in. There's other types of clean industry that could move into this area. So

I don't see where technology comes in with an airport.

I fail to see what's the problem with Opa-locka Airport. I don't wish to place our problems in other peoples houses, however that's an airport that already accomodates large planes. That's already an airport and is centralized to Fort Lauderdale Airport and North Dade County and more centralized to areas of distribution as opposed to coming all the way down here and far removed from the center of distribution.

I don't see why it has to be down here. I find the children act a lot more like adults than some of these shenanigans I've seen behind this entire process. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Roderick Tirrell.

000208 RODERICK T. TIRRELL: Good evening, Colonel and members. I'm Rod Tirrell and I represent twenty-two hundred members of the Broward Sierra Club. And we appreciate the

opportunity to comment on the conversion of the Homestead Air Force Base to a reserve airport.

It lies next to Everglades National Park, between Everglades National Park and Biscayne Bay. When we look at the South Florida natural areas, the natural resources, the bird life and fishing and diving, there's millions of dollars in tourism that come to this area.

The tourists come to enjoy these natural surroundings. We worry what's going to happen to the park, to the areas that are around it. Everglades National Park has been determined to be of international significance and a world heritage site, and we should take every precaution to keep it and take every precaution in doing anything with the property.

These issues of tourism are good for Miami, they're good for Homestead, and not pollution sites. This is public land held by the public. The Army Corps of Engineers is paying to restore the Everglades as much as eight million dollars, and now we have this

new threat to Everglades National Park.

The Federal Government and the Air Force has the obligation to consider the outcome, not only for the residents of Dade County, but to the owners who hold this property. The Army Corps of Engineers, like I said, the restoration of the Everglades will cost as much as eight millions dollars.

It's really unfortunate that the leaders of Homestead and Dade County have such a lack of vision and lack of ideas. There are a number of proposals that have been made. Multi-use makes sense and should be given first consideration.

Airports are a massive source of pollution. In addition to noise and traffic, it will have cumulative affects that will impact our air and water and parks.

Our lives are impacted by an airport People come to Everglades National Park to escape noise. Visitors come to national parks to avoid the onslaught. Please do not let another Federal blunder take place and support multi-use in that area. The people of South Dade and South Florida deserve it.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Brian Scherf.

000209 BRIAN SCHERF: My name is Brian Scherf and I'm with the urban environmental project that's very strongly opposed to a commercial airport in Homestead. I think it's a ludicrous idea to build a commercial airport two miles from a national park and thirty miles from an American crocodile refuge.

The South Florida ecosystem now has sixty-eight endangered species and the Everglades restoration, we have ninety percent restoration. Everglades National Park has lost about eight different species of birds. We're trying to recover these birds.

I think this airport would have grave impact on migration and nesting for those species. The airport proposal would also impact the ecosystem, which is globally in peril. This should be a restoration, not a destruction.

I would also like to recommend here

that any proposal, any alternative for the airport be considered. You know, one of our greatest problems in the national parks, in 1997, the park service developed a recommendation for buffers for national parks and it should be part of any proposal for any alternative to the airport.

The third item I want to address here is the compensation for the airport. This should not be a Government give-away. I'm sort of disappointed that the Collier-Hoover plan, they're proposing a very minuscule amount of mineral rights right next to the park. There are endangered parks like the Big Cypress in Southwest Florida. I'm coming out against this airport. We should discard it and do what environmentally makes sense Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Katherina Vanaby. Timothy Kunz.

000210 TIMOTHY KUNZ: I'm eighteen years old and I was born and raised here in Miami. I'm a freshman at Miami-Dade Community

College. I'm a member of the Ecology Club.

I think in the Everglades and the quiet that's there without an airport around, there's something that can't be known in the city and that's a certain unspeakable peace.

And I speak tonight not for myself, not for the wildlife out there, not for the other people who are aware of what it is and what it's worth, but I speak on behalf of the people who support this airport, because I don't believe that they know peace.

And I think that if they had been there, which I doubt, that they were thinking about other things and didn't pay attention because they wouldn't be able to support this.

I feel compassionate, but I do believe you should go at least once before and if this happens. And not so much that you should feel bad at seeing what you will do, but that you see it at least once. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Gregory Bush.

000211 GREGORY W. BUSH: Good evening, I'm Greg Bush. I'm a member of the Urban Environmental group of Miami, Community Council 12. I'm also director of the Institute of Public History at the University of Miami. I've been involved with some struggles in past years in terms of the Miami Circle and Bicentennial Park and Virginia Key.

And basically, I just want to give you a simple message that what I think is going on here is part of a much broader interlocking series of problems in terms of public land that's becoming eroded in Dade County.

And one of the warnings I would like to leave you with is the nature of the oversight of the county government because in 1982, Dade County was given Virginia Key. A significant portion of Virginia Key is public land. A lot of that park was left closed for years and years and years without any public oversight. By and large, it's still closed. I simply warn you of that in terms of the quality of oversight of Dade County in terms

of this land and this conveyance.

I also think that in many instances, in contemporary American life, people are obsessed with big industry as a panacea. And yet what I think is even more significant and is important for you all to think about is the human scale. Homestead's very name is a concept that goes back to the Civil War, which meant small scale farming. Small scale Homestead, if you will.

I think the very name of this community should be considered when you all are making these decisions about the kind of changes which are going to be made. As far as I'm concerned, the Collier-Hoover plan makes a lot more sense.

If you take a look at Miami Lakes and others, it's much more of a human-friendly area. I think it could be developed along those lines. So I would urge you to seriously consider that. Thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Jules Minkus.

000212 JULES MINKUS: I'm Dr. Minkus and I've been a resident of Dade County since 1966. I run a medical center in South Dade.

I don't believe that the transfer of the base to a commerical airport would put us more on an ecological balance than we are today. When I came to Dade County, there were seven hundred thousand people. The acquired land was tremendously deteriorating. In the past twenty years, we have maybe two million plus people living on a postage stamp of land.

Hurricanes came and I lived through many. I lived through th eHurricane Andrew disaster and it actually destroyed most of the society that was built up down here. Homestead and South Dade is essential to the development of the population and I believe there's a limited need for a commerical airport in that area. The Air Force Base has been there serving a national purpose, but there are smaller aviation airports that serve recreation use which may be considered.

But to turn that area into a high-industry area would only destroy the

quality of life. Nobody comes to any area to go to the airport. An airport is a plateau that you go through.

Basically, many of the residents that use to come to retire to South Dade to get out of the cold, no longer come here. Few people come here voluntarily. Now we have twenty-five percent poverty rate in Dade County and a growing problem from an economic standpoint.

Building an airport, in itself, will produce jobs, I guess, greater jobs for our community like somebody said for the poor. We have two basketball arenas, which we probably don't need and they're right down there on the waterfront. We managed to destroy the environmental area. We've got concrete jungles.

And putting an airport down there will waste the water. And I don't know if you saw on 60 Minutes, they say there's new additives in our gasoline that will pollute almost every ground water in the United States.

I have thirty seconds more. Let me

finish up by saying the pollution from the Miami International Airport will take years to get over. And if we continue to pollute our ground water, we'll have to move in a hurry and not before a hurricane blows us out. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Jim McMasters is next.

000213 JIM McMASTERS: I'm Jim McMasters. In the next twenty years it's projected that one million more people are going to come to Dade County. I'm sure you've been down to Homestead on the Turnpike. As you can see, lines are almost down to Homestead.

The question now is whether we put an airport down there which will pretty much rule out middle-class housing down there or would the suburbs of Miami move down to Homestead and have middle-class housing down there.

I live in the City of Miami. We have the Port of Miami within the city limits and Miami International, which is the seventh

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largest airport. Homestead has today, a nuclear power plant, a limited military airport, a baseball stadium, a speedway and some of the best farm land in the nation and two national parks.

Homestead is the entrance to the Florida Keys. It has the Village of Homestead within the city. Tell me any other small town in America that has half of these assets. We need to stop complaining and use what we have and not put an airport down there.

The Villages of Homestead is within the city limits of Homestead. What will the impact be of an airport. They're going to destroy the very assets that they're using now.

Who are the people that are complaining about the noise at Miami International Airport? They're the people on the upper east side on the bay, they're the people on Brickell on the bay, they're the people on Key Biscayne, seven miles away. They talked to the FAA. They went out to visit the site. What have they done about

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the noise? Absolutely nothing. They refuse to do anything.

Opa-locka has been told by the FAA to reduce the number of flights in Opa-locka and Tamiami. Check your facks about the FAA. It took the EPA to enforce the replacement of the cross pipeline that was leaking and getting ready to expload.

We have a sewage treatment plant in the middle of Biscayne Bay. It took a court order to get the county to start working on it. We're looking at a third of a billion dollars of pollution clean-up. They refused to do anything until the EPA stepped in.

Unless you start dealing with the pollution at Miami International Airport, as the Mayor of Miami Springs said, it reduced the quality of life, because the pollution from the airport is pulled into the north well area.

We hear a lot about promises. I live in Coconut Grove. We have developers coming in saying they will develop and help the poor folks in Coconut Grove. We haven't seen a change. Thank you.

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JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Marleen Kutler. Okay. That completes all the cards of individuals who had not spoken before.

I'll go through the cards of individuals who have already spoken at least once at these proceedings.

Richard Frost. I believe he's gone. Jamie Brown still here? I don't see her. Jonathan Ullman still here?

000214 JONATHAN ULLMAN: Good evening. I guess we're closing up another road. It's hard sitting throughout of these hearings. I'm Jonathan Ullman, national director of Sierra Club of South Florida.

I would like to say there's a good reason that I'm one of the last people, it's because I'm going to be here at all the meetings, but I'm really glad that you instituted that rule that people who had already spoken at other meetings can't speak again because this limits the eight or so politicians that spoke at the first meeting to grandstand and to represent the developer.

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JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: You can speak again, you just speak last.

JONATHAN ULLMAN: Right. But anyway, I'm going to talk a little bit now about noise. And noise is something that really bothered me when I read this SEIS.

There were some statements that didn't kind of jive with some of the statements that the kids were making. I mean, I don't want to tell the kids, you know, I'm sorry kids, but your thoughts about noise get in the way of this very large contract that was awarded.

But there is something about noise in the SEIS. It says studies in national parks by FAA and the Air Force showed no correlation between increasing noise levels and visitors. Well, I thought I would play the noise and see if this is not an annoyance

(Recording was played.)

Okay. That's basically what you would be hearing every minute during the daylight hours with a two hundred and thirty plus flight airport.

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Then there was another statement in the SEIS, which was a little bizarre. Generally visitors are considered to be less sensitive to aircraft noise in area parks where there is substantial human activity and more sensitive to aircraft noise in areas where there is minimal human activity. Visitors in groups who are accompanied by children tend to be less sensitive to noise than people who are not surrounded by others.

That's my time. Good night.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Manny Romero.

000215 MANNY ROMERO: Good evening everybody. I want to be short and sweet like yesterday. I believe somebody was saying in 1940 this land was owned by Dade County and it was transferred to the Federal Government. I think it makes sense to me to give it back to Dade County.

I think that we're talking about the taxpayer's money to build the airport. The taxpayers are going to pay taxes and be part

of the solution. It's going to bring thirty-eight thousand jobs. That's a lot of jobs. We're talking about one million dollars in the next fifteen years.

It's going to take a year and cost us over five hundred thousand dollars to do the study and the only place they say the airport can be put is in Homestead.

We don't need more studies. Just give it to Dade County and move on. Thank you. Good night.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Ignacio Sanchez. Is he still here? I don't see him. Javier Herrera.

000216 JAVIER HERRERA: Hello, my name is Javier Herrera. I wanted show you a video and I apologize for that. I'm a student and eighteen years old. I represent the young community, which will be the ones that will benefit from all of this.

I plan on attending a four-year University and returning to Miami. I do not want to go away or travel to the West Coast

to get a job, I want to work at home, not as a caddy under the Collier-Hoover plan or as a ticket-taker with an advanced degree I obtained from a university from my own hard work, I want a job of the future.

And from the knowledge I've gathered, an airport is what the Homestead community is used to and this is a time of need. I feel you guys are making the right decision. Go ahead and build your airport. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Ana Palma.

000217 ANA PALMA: My name is Ana Palma. I don't know much, but I know that we need more jobs and there's a lot of unemployment.

I was there yesterday in the meeting and I noticed there were a lot of older people, most of them retired. They don't need a job; we do, our children do. They're growing up. They're starting out. Most of them are studying computers and other careers and they'll need a job. Please, do make the airport come true.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Luis Casas That may be a duplicate. He's not here anyway. Bill McClure still here. Apparently not. John Sikes. John Sikes here. Lloyd Brown.

000218 LLOYD BROWN: Since I'm speaking to an almost empty room, I'm going to deviate from my presentation and just address a couple of topics for the people who have stuck it out.

A young man spoke a minute go about wanting a job. I worked on the last Homestead project that was supposed to bring jobs, the Homestead Motor Complex. There were only two people on the crew that was actually from the area. Everyone else was from Texas, Kansas, North Carolina and Mexico. They were not from the area.

People who are going to be working in a commercial cargo airport are already working in those jobs. They're not going to be creating new jobs, they're going to move existing jobs into this area.

About the unemployment statistics, I

heard a lot of people talk about unemployment numbers in Homestead. Here are the Department of Labor statistics. The highest unemployment in the past ten years for Homestead was in the seven months preceding Hurricane Andrew when the Homestead Airport Base was fully operational. It was 10.3 percent for those seven months. The last month we have statistics for was November of '99. And just three months ago, it was down to 5.5 percent. That's pretty good.

There's some people that couldn't hold a job if you tied them to it. One month before that, 5.4 percent, the lowest the unemployment has been in Homestead in the past ten years. Anyone that tells you there's an unemployment monster in Homestead is lying to you.

I'm going to deviate from my prepared speech. I would like to say that the Environmental Impact Statement said it would be a good idea to build an airport. They also said it would be a good idea to put an airport in Alaska and maybe to put a nuclear power plant on Three-Mile Island. Union

Carbide didn't have to deal with that. When we went to build the chemical plant, we didn't have to deal with the environment to build a plant in Chunoba.

So I would just like to conclude by quoting Edward Abbey, by saying growth for the sake of growth is the philosophy of the cancer cell. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Jerry Patterson. Ramon Vasquez. That's all the cards I have.

Is there anybody that I may have called your name that was out of the room that didn't get to speak? Anybody who hasn't spoken who would like to speak tonight?

000219 BLANCA MESA: I would like to speak. My name is Blanca Mesa and I'm a resident here in Dade County. I would like to say something about the SEIS.

There are two things I would like you to look into. One, the agricultural retention study that Miami-Dade County was supposed to have completed several years ago

in order to retain agriculture in South Dade, and the other one is the Biscayne Land-Use study that the Government and cabinet were going to do a couple of years ago and never did it. They are two things that must be completed and analyzed before any kind of proposal for an airport can be done.

It's completely premature for you to perceive and have this as part of the SEIS. There are many areas that need to come together and figure out what they need to do and have a buffer around it, to buy the land you need and to identify the funding source that's purchasing all this land.

You're saying this airport is environmentally friendly and actually going to improve the environment. None of this is in here. We don't know how much it's going to cost.

We didn't know the taxpayers would be stuck with three hundred and thirty-four million dollars that it's going to cost for the new arena. No one told us that before.

My final comment is you need to extend the written comments. Thirty days is

not enough time for the general public to analyze pounds of material. It's very complex material.

Key Biscayne is an area of the community north of the Biscayne National Park that will have a flight plan. There have been no meetings on Key Biscayne. These are things that you need to look into, to extend the written comment period by a substantial period of time so a person can really understand what's at stake here and what's missing and what needs to be studied.

We need to take more time because it took millions of years to create. It took much longer for the land to rise from the ocean. And so if you make a mistake, it's a permanent mistake and you need to proceed very carefully. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Okay. Anybody else? We've got one more?

000220 ANTONIO MARTIN: Yes. I would just like to make a comment. My name is Antonio Martin. I'm a resident of Dade County, born

and raised in Miami and served four years in the Marine Corps with an honorable discharge.

I'm a student at Miami-Dade Community College. I have brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews and I'm in support of the No-Use option and to retain the Air Force facility for what it was designed for. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Okay. I want to thank everybody for your comments and for participating in this public hearing. Your comments will be extremely helpful to the Air Force and other agencies in preparing the Final SEIS. As we close here, I want to remind you that if you didn't comment tonight or if you decide you have more to say, please write your comments down. You can leave them here with the staff tonight in the box on the comment table or you can mail them in later. Make sure they are mailed no later than March 7th. Thank you, again, for attending this public hearing.

This hearing is adjourned at 10:38 p.m.

(Thereupon, the hearing was adjourned.)

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF DADE

I, CAROLYN BURNS, Court Reporter, certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the above-entitled hearing and that the transcript is a true and complete record to the best of my ability.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, attorney, or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

Dated this 10th day of February, 2000.

CAROLYN BURNS
Court Reporter

Transcript of
Public Hearing

February 3, 2000
12:30 p.m.–2:50 p.m.

Renaissance Ballroom
5901 SW 8th Street
Miami, Florida

PUBLIC HEARING

ON

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL

IMPACT STATEMENT

DISPOSAL OF PORTIONS OF THE FORMER

HOMESTEAD AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA

ORIGINAL

Thursday, February 3, 2000
12:30 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.
Renaissance Ballroom
5910 S. W. 8th Street
Miami, Florida

Thereupon, the following Public Hearing was held before CHIEF TRIAL JUDGE MICHAEL B. McSHANE.

(Thereupon, for persons wishing to state their opinions before the commencement of the Public Hearing, the following private sessions were held:)

000221 RUTH MORALEZ-GIRON: My name is Ruth Moralez-Giron. First of all, I do believe in economic development, but not at the cost of the environment and the future generations.

I think there's other ways to go ahead and generate jobs and other places where an airport could be constructed. I'm in favor of protecting the Everglades, because by protecting the Everglades we protect ourselves and because I see the Everglades as the kidneys and the blood vessels of South Florida, you know, just the way the Amazon is the lungs of the world.

As the Everglades are right now, with all of the farming and everything, it already has a big negative impact on it and the airport will be the last straw. I'm speaking as a citizen and I feel I have a moral and ethical obligation to speak out for the future generations.

Our drinking water depends on the Everglades. The Biscayne aquifer and all of the living organisms, they all need the Everglades and

without the Everglades, we won't have anything.

People don't see that. Right now people are looking at the airport as a job-generating place. And it could be, but in the long term, everyone is going to be impacted by it.

The water is going to be contaminated. People are going to have cancer and all of that. In my lifetime, I've seen a lake dry up and the decay of the Rain Forest. In seven and a half years, that's all it took for the lake to be gone and the rain Forest to deteriorate. You know, it's the river of life. We all depend on water.

Turkey Point is a stone's throw away and, you know, if anything happened, a plane crashing or anything, that would be the end of South Florida and everything around it. So I guess we don't need the bad man on the island to do anything if we already damage it ourselves.

000222 DAVID B. GENOVESE: I would have to say that it seems to be a bit unfortunate and is absolutely unnecessary that we build a commerical airport. I would hope the other alternatives that are there with the Collier group and the other three different alternatives, three out of the

four has got got to be better than a commerical airport.

It just seems very unfortunate. It seems to me it would be an environmental nightmare, so to speak, if we build a commerical airport that is close to our natural resources. That's about all I have.

Public Hearing
12:30 p.m.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Just a couple of announcements before we get started. If you have signs or banners, take them off your seats. Please do not display them from the seats, you'll be blocking someone else's view.

And I learned this at the other hearings, a lot of people have cell phones out there. Please turn them off.

At this point, I anticipate that we will end this afternoon's session no later than about 4:30 p.m. It depends. If we have one or two speakers, I'm sure we'll be gone and finished, but at this time, I anticipate no later than 4:30.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome to the Public Hearing on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on the Disposal of Portions of the former Homestead Air Force Base.

My normal duties include presiding over Air Force court-martials, but this week I've been made available to preside over this series of five hearings which are being held in this area concerning the disposal and subsequent reuse of former Homestead Air Force Base property.

Just so you know, I have not been involved in the development of any of these proposals that are being considered, and my job is just to make sure that we have a fair and orderly hearing here today.

I want to thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to come here today for this public hearing. If you're interested in further information about the proposals, I hope you took time to visit with the technical staff prior to this portion of the hearing.

In preparing this Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, or Draft SEIS, which you will hear us refer to it as, it was the Air Force's goal to understand the environmental

implications of deciding for what purpose and to whom to convey surplus property at former Homestead Air Force Base.

The Draft SEIS examines reasonable ways in which the property might be developed, used, and the reasonably foreseeable environmental consequences of the alternatives.

At this time, I would like to introduce Major Mike Chipley of the Air Force Executive Issues Team. He is an engineer with a Ph.D. in civil engineering from the University of California.

Major Chipley will discuss the proposed action and alternatives and provide a short synopsis of the reuse issues. Since the overall purpose of these hearings is to obtain input from you on the contents of the Draft SEIS, the presentation will be short.

MAJOR MIKE CHIPLEY: Thank-you, Colonel McShane. I, too, would like to extend my thanks to all of you for taking time to provide your comments on the Draft SEIS.

For the past several years, we have been engaged in the process of completing the

realignment and reuse of the former Homestead Air Force Base as required by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act.

The Air Force's primary goal in this process is to transfer the properties in a manner that supports local plans for economic revitalization of South Florida and protects Biscayne Bay and the nearby national parks. A disposal must also be compatible with continuing the existing military and law enforcement missions. The Air Force and Federal Aviation Administration, or FAA, are the designated lead agencies for the Draft SEIS.

The Air Force has decision-making responsibilities for the transfer of the property. The FAA has decision-making responsibilities for airport facilities.

There are three cooperating agencies. One cooperating agency is the National Park Service because it manages Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park. Another cooperating agency is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service because of its responsibilities to ensure threatened and endangered species are adequately considered and because of the proximity of

Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

And the third cooperating agency is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency because of its regulatory responsibilities.

The contractor hired by the Air Force to actually conduct the analysis is Science Applications International Corporation, or SAIC for short. They have been supported by another contractor, Landrum and Brown, which performed the airport planning and noise analyses.

I would like to take a couple of minutes to update you on the SEIS process and what has occurred since the scoping period ended in July of 1998. More than 440 individuals, organizations and agencies provided written input during our 132 day scoping period. And 195 people spoke at our public scoping meetings.

The size and complexity of the Draft SEIS has grown substantially because of the number and diverse nature of issues and because of the many federal agencies, state and local governments, private organizations and concerned citizens involved.

Midway through the analysis, two mixed-use proposals were received which were

incorporated into the analysis. We recognize that this has been a long process for everyone. We want you to know many other communities have also struggled through the base closure process.

Some former bases have been developed for aviation uses, others for non-aviation uses. The success of redevelopoment depends upon the local community involvement and support.

The Draft SEIS examines a number of reuse alternatives for remaining surplus property at the former base. Ongoing reuse involving property that has already been transferred, like the Job Corps Center, the Dade County Homeless Trust, the regional park and other needed properties, would continue under any of the alternatives.

The alternatives underwent thorough and complex analyses of the environmental and economic impact that could potentially occur as a result of redevelopment. Fourteen topics were used as the basis for the analysis.

Public and agency concerns that were expressed at our scoping meetings identified important issues and helped focus our analysis. Those concerns have been incorporated throughout the Draft SEIS.

When the reuse planning process was initiated for Homestead Air Force, Miami-Dade County was designated as the local reuse authority to develop a reuse plan for the former base. The county has proposed that the 1,632 acres of remaining surplus property at former Homestead Base be transferred to Miami-Dade County Aviation Department for development of a commerical airport.

This is the proposed action addressed in the Draft SEIS. The analysis of the proposed action included identifying and assessing new flight tracks that would be used at the commerical airport.

Airport operations, in general, are characteristically different than commerical or residential land uses in the types of numbers of vehicles, equipment and people, and the resulting impact to the environment.

The main issues of the proposed action involve air pollution, storm water run-off and nose levels. Another alternative examined in the Draft SEIS is a commerical spaceport. The main issues with the commercial spaceport alternative involve the uncertainties related to the licensing

process, safety and potential increase in noise.

Three approaches were examined for non-aviation uses, presented as the Mixed-Use Alternative, Market-driven development, The Collier Resources Company proposal, and the Hoover Environment Group plan.

The Mixed-Use alternatives could create higher intensity of use in a shorter period of time, but may have less environmental effects on the national parks.

The Draft SEIS also includes the No Action alternative, which means the property continues to belong to the government and reverts to caretaker status.

Under each alternative, the Air Force, Florida Air National Guard, and Customs Service continue to use the runway for their current military missions.

The Draft SEIS addresses each alternative in the context of future growth in South Florida and also takes into account potential cumulative impacts of other projects. It also includes some historical information where available.

Your views and comments on the Draft SEIS will be important as we work toward completing the

Final SEIS. We are now about half-way through the 60-day public comment period.

We scheduled these hearings to provide you an opportunity to review the Draft SEIS and formulate comments you can give here today, and also to provide some time after these hearings so you can incorporate things you might learn here tonight, into written comments.

Whether you choose to comment today or to provide your comments in writing between now and March 7th, we look forward to receiving your inputs and assisting us in completing the Final SEIS.

The Final SEIS, scheduled for completion in July, 2000, will include comments made at the public hearings or submitted in writing during the public comment period for the Draft SEIS, along with Air Force and FAA responses to your comments.

A decision on what action will be taken concerning the transfer of the disposal property will be made no earlier than thirty days after publication of the Final SEIS.

We will continue to distribute news releases and send newsletters to those on our mailing list throughout the final course of the

SEIS process. Anyone wishing to be added to the mailing list should complete an attendance card located at the registration table in the foyer and check the appropriate box on the card.

In summary, I would like to say that we do understand this is a complicated and often frustrating process. Let me reiterate that neither the Air Force nor FAA proposes to directly develop the surplus property.

The Air Force's goal is to transfer the property in a manner that supports local plans for economic revitalization and protects Biscayne Bay and the nearby national parks. A disposal must also be compatible with continuing the existing military and law enforcement missions.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Thank-you, Major Chipley. Each of the proponents of the alternatives shall have the opportunity to describe their proposal and speak about it.

Miami-Dade County representatives hae been given ten minutes to speak about their proposals. You may also have noticed that some of the other proponents, although they elected not to give a presentation, have materials available at

the tables in the back of the room.

At this time, I would call on the representatives from Miami-Dade County to discuss their proposal.

BRUCE DRUM: Good afternoon, my name is Bruce Drum. I'm Assistant Aviation Director for Airside Operations. I'm speaking today on behalf of our aviation director, Mr. Gary Dallapa.

On behalf of the Miami-Dade Airport System, I want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to present our Department's recommendations for the redevelopment of the former Air Force base.

It's important for this panel to bear in mind that the additional capacity issues that are addressed today are not just South Dade issues, not just Miami-Dade County issues, but issues of great concern to all of South Florida.

In previous testimony, you have heard from other elected officials on what the decision on reuse means to the continued prosperity of this county. History is on the side of aviation.

The South Florida community has a long-standing prominent position in aviation

dating back to the first airline terminal in the United States. Since 1928 and continuing through tourism of foreign trade, this community has come through a line of aviation histories. as the underpinning of our local economy and the chief provider of jobs.

All is not well however. The current system of airports is taxed to the extremes of its limits and will prove unable to meet future market demands unless augmented by new aviation.

In support of this understanding, the airport has a display with documents and graphics on future aviation demand and our capacity to meet that demand. It's imperative that you understand that the inability to meet market demand, means loss of economic growth and seriously impacts our employment base and business community.

You may be aware of our efforts to accelerate the construction of a fourth runway at Miami Internationl Airport. That is the single most important element of the department's long-range development plan. However, this final plan to meet our capacity at Miami International will not be able to meet the air traffic forecast for beyond the year, 2015.

Our primary development strategy is to provide the facilities now as well as long-term demand. The critical element of this strategy is the flexibility to be able to react to future aviation growth that may be unforeseen today in stimulating foreign commerce growth.

Miami-Dade's most limiting capacity constraint today is the number of full service commerical runways available in our airport system to safely manage aircraft. MIA is currently at a point where no additional runway can be provided.

Numerous efforts in the last three decades to identify new sites in South Florida for a commerical aviation facility have proven fruitless. There are no other sites. Consequently, the most crucial issue confronting us today is a decision on the ultimate reuse plan for Homestead Air Force Base.

That decision will effect whether or not this community will be able to accomodate the tremendous world-wind growth in aviation that is forecast, a growth that we will be unable to meet with MIA and our other airports alone.

For example, as we reported in the SEIS, Opa-locka has air space and environmental issues.

From an aviation point of view, the conclusion is inescapable, we need the Homestead airport. The need for a long-term capacity demand will not come at the expense of environmental incompatibility.

One of the Aviation Department's objectives is to provide aviation to meet demands while ensuring a balance between environmental issues, quality of life and economic issues for Florida residents.

The SEIS shows there are no environmental impacts associated with the airport alternative. Commercial aircraft is found to be less intrusive on the Everglades than those resulting from the military presence.

Miami-Dade County is committed to ensuring that the plan and development of the commerical airport is done in an environmental manner. This is not just words. Miami-Dade Aviation has a track record of environmental responsibility. We've spent over one hundred and seventy million dollars since 1994 to address environmental issues. One of the main objectives of our current program is maintaining the environment not only of the air, but of the soil as well.

These are very real, very tangible statements to hear. The meaning is clear, that under the leadership of the County Commission and our County Manager, no one should fear the airport alternative. Miami-Dade Aviation is in full agreement with the activity proposed in the SEIS.

The projected operations provide for future demands. We believe that the airport is most compatible with the land use. Furthermore, advances in airplane and engine technology should be under consideration.

We have commercial flight activity. This is evident in the mandatory conversion statement. This change was effective January 1, 2000. Another example of this type of technology change is increase in the use of flights of the major air carriers.

In conclusion, we are at the crossroads as to the future of aviation in South Florida. This is our only opportunity to preserve a valuable airport, regional aviation, and allow this county to grow and prosper. Thank-you.

RAMON RASCO: Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Ramon Rasco. I represent the developer

selected by Miami-Dade County in a competitive process which resulted in a very fair and inclusive lease for the development of a clean high-tech airport that is compatible with our environment.

You just heard Bruce Drum for the Aviation Department. For the record, there is conclusive evidence that this community needs another airport and the logical and suitable site is Homestead. Ladies and gentlemen, there is no other feasible site in our community.

After seven years of the most comprehensive studies in our nation, we have now seen the results in the Draft SEIS, which is so strongly opposed by many groups. Some of the groups are not doing studies and trying to win with litigation. So I say to them, let them throw a bomb big enough to stop this project. We will not be intimidated.

Ladies and gentlemen, the SEIS conclusively shows that this airport can be built without damage to our parks or environment. The appropriate measures are taken. In addition to the SEIS and the other federal studies, this county has paid for over twenty-seven other

studies and mitigation plans that were developed in order to protect our environment from the impacts of this commerical airport.

The developer will put on the record and once again state publicly on the record that they are committed to making all appropriate mitigation efforts in order to build an airport that is compatible with our parks and environment.

Ladies and gentlemen, the airport plan at the former Homestead Base is the best plan for our community. Don't take my word for it, read the SEIS. And don't be afraid of intimidation tactics. Thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: This concludes a presentation of information about the proposals. In a few minutes, we will begin the public comment portion of the hearing.

You will have several ways to provide your comments. If you brought written comments, please place them in the box on the comment table out in the lobby. Written comments do carry the same weight as oral comments, which are presented here at the hearing.

If you want to write down your comments

while you're here, there are forms on the comment table to do that. You can take a form home to complete and mail it back to the address which is provided on the comment form.

You can also write your comments in your own format and mail them in. You do not need to use the comment forms; they are only provided for your convenience.

You will have the opportunity to provide oral comments when I begin the public comment portion of the hearing in just a couple of minutes.

Let me tell you a few things about the public comment period. Since we've calmed down from the Tuesday night crowd, we're going back to the usual procedure. Elected officials will speak first, then we will hear from those that submitted cards today indicating their desire to speak.

I plan to call people in the order that their cards were submitted. And depending on the size of the crowd today, I may have the repeat public speakers wait until all new speakers have made their comments. Anyone who has not yet filled out a card, should do that as soon as

possible so we do not miss anyone who wishes to comment.

Each individual or organization will have three minutes to provide comments. You may finish your sentence when your time is up. Please stop promptly so we can hear the maximum number of people.

Boos and clapping take time away from the time the speakers will have to speak today. Please respect their viewpoints and let them make their comments without interruption.

When you are called up to the microphones in the aisles, please clearly state your name and the name of the organization that you are representing before you make your comments so the court reporter can get that down.

The transcript will be the permanent record of this hearing and will be published in the Final SEIS. Please do not provide any personal information in your comments if you do want to see it published in the finals SEIS. It's very important that you use the microphones so that the court reporter and everyone else in the room can hear you.

The focus now is to listen to your

comments regarding the contents of the Draft SEIS. Preceding this presentation, you had an opportunity to ask questions one-on-one of the technical staff and hopefully they answered all your questions.

Any further questions asked in the course of making your statements will be addressed in the Final SEIS rather than answered today. So again, please focus your comments on the Draft SEIS and the analysis of the reuse options.

If you need to have your comments translated into English and did not so indicate when you signed in, let us know when you come up to speak. If you make comments today and later decide you have additional comments or know someone who is interested in the comment process but was unable to attend any of the meetings, written comments can be submitted until March 7, 2000. The mailing address can be found in all of the available hand-outs.

At this point, I'm going to go ahead and start calling on people. First, State Representative Casiro Herrero. He doesn't appear to be in the room. I'll go to Mario Diaz-Velarde. He left. Okay. Patricia Keon. Patricia Keon, is

she here. Apparently not. Javier Souto.

000223 JAVIER SOUTO: Good afternoon, I'm Javier Souto, commissioner from Miami-Dade county. I'm here to express my support for the construction of the airport, for the refurbishing of the base so it will support a commercial airport.

As you know, Miami-Dade County is one of the most important areas of the world vis-a-vis the commerical air traffic. We have a global designation. We're a gateway to Latin America. We're known world-wide.

We have only one functional airport as you know. The airport is located in the middle of this great community. The way it's going, the airport is not going to accomodate so much traffic. There are sometimes three or four or five large planes landing at the same time. We don't have to be rocket scientists to understand that imposes a risk to our community.

For all of those reasons and also the reasons of the community that some of the people have expressed, I think it's really important that we develop the airport as a commercial airport.

Thank you, very much

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Representative Herrero here? Apparently not. Patricia Keon. Next individual will be Nestor Penedo and we need the translator.

000224 NESTOR PENEDO: (Through Juan E. Gandara, Sr, interpreter)

Good afternoon, my name is Nestor Penedo. I'm director of the Cuban Environmental Association. We have never been involved in any hearings in the State of Florida or Miami because we are the type of organization which is dedicted to denouncing in regards to the operation being done by the Cuban government.

We have realized our function for twelve consective years in the United Nations, sharing the philosophy of the Earth Summit for twelve years and the loss of space and sustainable development. Progress can live with the environment.

This airport is already an airport for military aircraft. We are detaining progress for the community that is needed. And the laws and the regulations of the protection of the environment are being followed and there is no

danger to us living together. Human beings are the most perfect realization.

All the species are not controlling each other, man has control of them and man has also destroyed part of the environment, but also has created measures to resolve problems.

There are interests that lead to developing businesses and they are bona fide, but there are also interests which do not act with their cards on the table because they have their hidden agendas. It's not the same thing and everybody knows who they are, trying to develop an area and who hide behind the mask of the environment.

Like it happens in Seattle where they are capable of sending noxious quantities of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, we believe measures have been taken that are not going to affect the quality of life in Florida. Thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next speaker is Santiago Portal. Again, we need the translater.

000225 SANTIAGO PORTAL: (Through Juan E.

Gandara, Sr, interpreter)

The two groups that are confronting this movement, the environmentalists, and those who want to develop this area of Florida, they could be very much in agreement with each other and thus reach the goals that they have proposed for themselves.

I have had the solution to the problem of the environment since 1987. I have tried to reach all of the govenmental agencies, including the White House. Nobody in the United States govenment wants to solve the problem of pollution in the environment. But I do believe there are millions of others who do want the solution.

I do hope that these gentlemen, the ones who are opposing the airport, and they have indeed invested millions of dollars, and the people of this movement, get together and eventually they can contact me so we can solve this situation because it could be solved. We can have conversion systems. It's time for all individuals who develop them to have an opportunity because it's necessary to reach the great development of this great nation. They do involve universities and technological institutes. I do hope that

somebody contacts me to talk about this important solution. Thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next speaker is Dwight Kraai.

000226 DWIGHT KRAAI: Based on what I have heard, to me it's my opinion that it does not make sense to develop the Homestead Air Force Base to serve as a reliever airport. Fort Lauderdale Airport already exists that's closer to Miami International Airport than the Homestead Air Force Base.

I enjoy trips into Biscayne Bay. It's absolutely wonderful to be able to anchor off of Elliott Key and other bay areas to enjoy a peaceful day, but the noise from the arrival and departure of hundreds of airplanes daily would be just terrible.

The Mixed-Use plan takes an existing airport and provides for economic development, yet it protects the environment. The Mixed-Use plan should be the one that is accepted. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: The next speaker

is Jon Ullman.

000227 JONATHAN ULLMAN: Hi, how are you today. My name is Jonathan Ullman. I'm the South Florida representative for the National Sierra Club. The Sierra Club is a national organization with about six hundred thousand members in the United States. We're the oldest and largest grass-roots environmental organization and we're absolutely opposed to the airport.

The airport will be destructive to two national parks, Biscayne and Everglades National Park. These are world resources that we have. Hundreds of visitors come to these parks every year and they do not want their experience to be clouded by a commerical airport with two hundred and thirty thousand flights per year in its first phase. That will be a plane every minute during daylight hours.

Now, you may ask why are we so concerned, what is the problem here. Well, the problem here is that we're not going to let the park areas that are preserved by this great nation that are preserved for eternity not just for the next generation but for the next and the next and the

next, be compromised by one entity.

This is a national park system. We get visitors from over the world who come to see the best of this great land. This commercial airport if built would be the largest commercial airport next to a national park in the United States. I'm going to play for you the sound that visitors will hear every minute and you tell me if it's acceptable to you.

(A recording was played.)

The rest of the country is not going to worry about this. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: OSCAR DIAZ:

000228 OSCAR DIAZ: My name is Oscar Diaz. I'm a citizen of this county for forty years and I think this is one of the most important issues that this community has ever been confronted with

I would like to consider myself an environmentalist. I love the outdoors and I enjoy national parks as well as anybody else. I'm the oldest person in the Association of Cuban Engineers. I have discussed this matter with many of my colleagues.

It's my belief that this airport is very necessary for this community. I believe that the pollution control and constraints that are going to be placed on this airport are not going to damage the environment. I believe that jobs will be created that are needed by this community.

By the way, I just want to make a comment about the gentleman that just spoke. He most likely flew into Miami. Thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Darren Harrell.

000229 DARREN HARRELL: Good afternoon everyone, my name is Darren Harrell. I'm a Representative of the National Audubon Society and Florida Audubon Society.

The Audubon Society is well aware that the residents of the Homestead community need jobs. We're not taking away from that. But what we're saying is that an airport is not the only solution. There are other alternatives.

The Audubon Society proposes more of a Mixed-Use plan. I'm going to speak to that in a minute. What I want first to talk about is what is being done.

A lot of the supporters of the airport and the Homestead residents that are wearing the T-shirts that say Airport Jobs, we appreciate seeing all the T-shirts, but I want to take a closer look at that. If you really think about it, the number of employees within an airport, the airport leases space to the airlines and the airlines take employees based on the amount of cargo they ship and the amount of passengers that use it.

It's not known exactly how many airlines will use the airport and how many passengers will go through each airline or how many jobs are going to be provided granted, thirty-eight thousand jobs is an ideal situation, but there is no guarantee that we will have thirty-eight thousand jobs.

Another point is, a lot of these jobs are hired-hand jobs, which means existing airline employees from Opa-locka, MIA and Fort Lauderdale will have first chance at these jobs. What does that tell you in reference to Homestead. All the hired-hand jobs will disappear.

You will not have the opportunity for these jobs because you don't have the experience and you're not in the Union. That is going to

mean the lower end of $6 and $7 an hour jobs.

A lot of people are saying they want to support their families. How are you going to support your families by making $7 an hour handling luggage. That's something that the airport planners have failed to discuss. They tell you we have thirty-eight thousand jobs, they don't address the income behind the thirty-eight thousand jobs.

Like I was saying, as far as the Mixed Use, Mixed Use will provide a large variety of jobs, not just low-end jobs which would be left, and it will provide jobs of a variety of levels for a variety of different people. Basically what I'm trying to say is this airport is just a quick major reaction to an economic problem. And we do admit there is an economic problem.

Well, my time is up, but I just want to say we can do better than promoting a program that is going to provide low-income, minimum wage, $5 and $6 jobs

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Marielene Villamil.

000230 MARIELENA VILLAMIL: Afternoon and thank you. My name is Marielena Villamil and you pronounced it very well. I'm the president and CEO of a commercial research firm based here in Coral Gables.

Commercial development for the 21st Century needs more products and services. And Miami-Dade County has a comparative advantage in the sense of an airport. The role of Miami-Dade County has been an avenue of commerce between the United States and Latin America.

The role is already well documented by the recent studies of the Association of Florida Enterprise that indicates the strong need to expand the infrastructure of this county into the 21st.

The total trade in Florida reached a record sixty-nine billion dollars in 1998. In South Florida, which is District 52, which goes from Fort Pierce to the Florida Keys, it was about eight percent of the total. Our studies forecast by the year, 2003, total trade in Florida will reach a hundred billion dollars and a hundred and twenty-six billion dollars by the year, 2008.

This gives us a strong argument in favor

of expanding and enhancing the present infrastructure to handle efficiently the increased trade and job opportunities as Miami-Dade County attempts to benefit and to respond to future needs.

In essence, airports are the logistic centers for commerical trade. Increased trade means opportunities for Miami-Dade County, but it does not necessarily mean that we will be the recipients of such trade if the infrastructure is not present.

The airport in Homestead would be positioned so as to solidify the role of Miami-Dade County in the future trade area.

Therefore, the Homestead airport is necessary in order create jobs and and create economic activity in Miami-Dade County, Florida for the 21st Century. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Alicia Kehrehahn.

000231 ALICIA KEHERHAHN: My name is Alicia Keherhahn. An airport will do irreparable damage to Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park, our two unique treasures. The better

solution is to expand Opa-locka because they have the infrastructure. In fact, the mayor welcomed the idea and said he will provide what is the best development plan.

What would be the best way to protect the environment and provide jobs is the Collier-Hoover plan. How lucky we are that the Department of the Interior has recognized the threat imposed by the airport to the ecology, the safety of a nuclear power plant and quality of life in Homestead. The Collier-Hoover plan will provide jobs to the people of Homestead while preserving the wildlife and quality of our national parks. Please reject the airport plan.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next is Michael Volante.

000232 MICHAEL VOLANTE: Good afternoon. My name is Michael Volante. Thank you for letting me speak today. I've been a resident of Miami all of my life. I was born and raised here.

As we heard, Miami International Airport may reach full capacity by 2006. I don't think anyone can deny that a relief airport will be

needed. Homestead Air Force Base is the only possible alternative. Logistically, it offers safety. Opa-locka airport does not.

The Collier plan is a weak attempt to create a smoke-screen over the issues. The last thing we need is another golf course or a public aquarium or shopping mall. Golf courses use fertilizers and use excessive amounts of water. An aquarium removes fish and animals from their natural environments. The Collier plan can be more of an environmental hazard than an airport plan.

The issues that have been pointed out by environmentalists against the airport, these issues have been addressed by the Draft SEIS study. And now it's time to move ahead to the betterment of our county.

I would like to create a new term today, an environmental realist. The definition I'll give to this term is a person that provides a solution to a problem which deadlocks environmental and human needs.

Being an environmental realist is difficult. It strikes a cord in the two opposite groups. It addresses the environmental needs and

uses new technology for food storage and water runoff as well as management

There is no reason that the future of this project should be jepardized over these issues. There is no reason that the future of Miami-Dade County should be jeopardized over these issues.

Let us be environmental realists and do the right thing, make the right choices and respect the environment and restore Homestead Air Force Base to its rightful place in aviation. Thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Edward Malcer

000233 EDWARD MALCER: My name is Edward Malcer. I've been in Miami since 1943 and I represent the 435th Aerotroop, a veterans association. We've been in the Miami area and the Homestead Air Force Base in the early 50s, when it was a small air base down there with a tower And we've flown aircraft C46, C198, 130s and jets. I had been stationed at the air base for training also for the Cuban Crisis during the 60s.

And basically what we would like to do is

just to have a place to stay because we were at the Miami International and we needed space so we moved to Homestead. We would like to have a continuation of the area reservists there in conjunction with the other facilities.

We should have a close relationship with all of South America and Caribbean regions of the world. Environmentally, you have the water and places for all of the people there. We want to keep that and also possibly for the Air Force to have a recreational area for the retired people and a place for families that would be reasonable and affordable, such as Hawaii, Europe and other places Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next is Jose Romero.

000234 JOSE ROMERO: Hello, again, my name is Jose Romero. I'm here in favor of the return of the land to Dade County. Dade County used to have all the land and now it's time to give it back to Dade County.

An airport on this land has growth for the future. I think South Dade needs jobs, these

thirty seven thousand jobs. We need the airport. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Greg Ballinger here? Next is Candida Mesa. We need a translator.

000235 CANDIDA MESA: (Through Juan E. Gandara, Sr., professional interpreter)

I would like to give my greetings to all the people present here. You are very cultured and intelligent and smart.

I come here because we have a right to give our opinion. I want to be brief. I have lived here since 1962 when it was clean and beautiful. My grandchildren have had wonderful times in the area.

I'm against the airport because it causes very many illnesses and we want to live and bring up our grandchildren in a clean environment. That's the most important thing.

I want to say to all of those people that know anything, first of all, the families are first. I don't know what else to say. Excuse me for being a housewife. Thank-you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Gwladys Scott.

000236 GWLADYS SCOTT: I understand the need for the Homestead Air Base to continue to be a military airport, but the use of the land for a commerical airport is first of all a very poor location. It's in a cul-de-sac of what surrounds it. It would have to be approached from the north and have massive amounts of roadways to get people to and from it.

It will not benefit South Dade. Maybe it will certain individuals, but I presume a lot of the money would be made for folks that are not in South Dade. I presume there will be many jobs, but I presume that those also will not be for South Dade.

The major objection for me is that it is in the wetlands environment and has parks east and west and really The Keys to the south and it's on the edge of a population center. And there will be, unfortunately, even with state and county regulations, which this of course will come under, there will be ground water pollution. Currently there's that sort of problem at the Homestead Airport Base. And at this time, the Miami

International Airport is not free of pollution and that, unfortunately, will be the case in the future.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next speaker will be Luisa Arce.

000237 LUISA ARCE. Hello, my name is Luisa Arce. My address is 26420 Southwest 122nd Avenue. I live in Naranja. I'm here today as a resident of my community, Naranja, and a neighbor to you. I want to speak on behalf of an endangered species, the people of Naranja.

I want you to know that my community has the highest unemployment in the South Dade County area. And it's also well-known that my community had been named the Dead Zone by our own county.

My community needs jobs. My community also has a great need for our children to have a better quality of life. The children are our future. We're starving in our area.

I want you to know that I have three children myself, which I would defend with my life and I defended the park in Naranja. I fought for that park. I defended the park, because it was

going to be what is now a golf course there. I think it's a waste of nature. There was land destroyed to be a lake. I fought for that.

I want you to know in my community, Naranja, this air base was the heart of it. Before Andrew, we had a great economy. After Andrew, not even the flies go there.

Airplanes are going to fly over my head and I'm in favor of it. Right now, everyone closes their eyes from 216th all the way to The Keys. Until they get to The Keys, they don't open their eyes.

And it's a shame that we're here today defending birds and frogs and we're forgetting about something that's very important, humans. Humans are first. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: The next speaker is Bill McHugh.

000238 BILL McHUGH: I'm Bil McHugh with McHugh & Associates, airport consultants. I'm here to speak for the conversion of the Homestead Air Force Base into a joint-use military and ancillary airport.

This airport has been at this location since 1930 and has had a variety of military operations during that period of time. Many of these operations have been active and very noisy because military aircraft make more noise than civil aircraft.

Therefore, suffice to say that the proposed civil use, along with the military use of this airport, does not interrupt the historical use of the airport at this area.

This type of conversion of a military airbase is not new. The military has turned air bases over to municipalities since the end of World War II. As a matter of fact, this airport was turned over to Dade County in 1946 and then reacquired in 1952.

Many of these facilities have been successful and have brought economic growth to the communities. As a matter of fact, in the United States today, there are fifteen thousand airports. And of those fifteen thousand, seven thousand are open to the public. Of the seven thousand open to the public, around four thousand have received federal assistance one way or the other.

Of that four thousand, six hundred and

fifty airports in the United States are subject to federal surplus property transfers as this facility would be. They have brought industry, either light or heavy, to the community, along with roads.

This successful formulation development over the years for air field reuse has derived sufficient land with the transfer in order to induce industry and to help support the airport. This has brought economic development to the community as well as additional jobs.

This is not to say that all of those living in the community today will receive jobs as a result of this transfer. This means that the opportunity is there for them to get jobs. Granted, many of the people that live in this area will not qualify for jobs, but some training will help them get the jobs they need. Thank you, very much

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next speaker is Paul Brohman.

000239 PAUL BROHMAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is an issue affecting my home.

Even with the high professional caliber of operations of the U.S. Air Force, it is my understanding that prior agricultural land will be used to establish a buffer zone around the airport.

This land would become unavailable for agricultural due to run-off of airport contaminants. I find it difficult to understand how this does not constitute an unacceptable environmental impact.

Airplanes crash. Now, that's a truth. Consult the Miami daily newspaper to confirm this fact. I don't wish for a crash zone to border my backyard. Many speak for airport development, however no one whom I heard speak is going to buy my house located at the end of the proposed east-west runway.

Perhaps they're waiting for values to drop ten to thirty percent. I'll become a prisoner of my own home. No longer will the windows to be open to the South Florida breezes. Politicians choose to ignore my opinion. Of course these people don't live in my neighborhood.

Yes, this community needs jobs. The development of the airport, however, I cannot

support. It should not be necessary to destroy all that my neighbors and my family now enjoy.

Alternate proposals offer jobs, a lot of jobs. Mixed-Use can be a livable alternative. There's no proposal to provide for unskilled labor. As a certified tradesman living in Homestead, my rate of pay is $10 to $12 an hour. Don't be swayed by promises of high-paying jobs, it simply won't happen.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Eladia Armesto-Garcia:

000240 ELADIO ARMESTO-GARCIA: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Eladio Garcia. I was on the Miami Zoning Board. I have three kids. If you go by US-1 and 216th Street, it's a Ghost Town. In the 21st Century, it can be compared to a Ghost Town.

My question to everybody is, what's the difference between an airplane carrying military personnel and other airplanes traveling with groceries and merchandise. What's the difference. Tell me, I want to hear it from the commission if there is any difference.

I used to be a pilot myself. There's no differnce. It's the same airplane, manufactured by the same company. Why now is it different if it's used for civilian purposes. Will you tell me the difference.

Yes, the people that know about aviation have said that the civilian aircraft, the cargo aircraft, produces less contamination, less noise. I'll be happy to tell you this is not true. And by the way, I'm been here for forty years and have four kids and eighteen grandchildren born in Jackson. Some live in Miami. I can speak for myself, my wife and four kids and my grandchildren, Cuban and American. Four children, all here.

What's the difference between their aircraft and civilian aircraft, their aircraft coming or cargo. Thank you for your time.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Lloyd Brown.

000241 LLOYD BROWN: Thank you. My name is Lloyd Brown, Director of Wildlife Rescue in Dade County. I would like to address a few things that have been badly represented here.

First off is that the environmentalists who oppose an airport are not from this area. There is not one family here that has more history in the county than mine. Except for the fourteen years that I spent in the Army as a Paratrooper, I've been in this county all my life.

During my time in the Army, I fought in two wars and in the Special Forces in the Middle East. Everybody here has the right to their opinions and their own safety. They're guaranteed that in the Constitution.

I heard that the Air Force Base is going to end this unemployment problem in Homestead. The fact is that I've got a document right here from the Department of Labor that states that the highest unemployment in Homestead happened in the seven months prior to Hurricane Andrew with Homestead Air Force Base fully operational.

The unemployment in Homestead was 10.3 percent. And as of October of 1999, four months ago, unemployment in the Homestead area was the lowest rate in the last ten years.

Tuesday night I heard someone say they would rather see an airplane crash into the Everglades than Downtown Hialeah. I agree that

would be better than the tragic loss of life. It would be tragic. We could get over the environmental damage and in a few years we would be able to tell where the crash site was. But if a plane crashed into Turkey Point, the crash site wouldn't be Homestead, it would be all of Dade County.

The SEIS said there was no environmental impact from this airport. Well, a few years ago they said the same thing about putting an air terminal in Alaska. Before that, they said it would be good to put a nuclear power plant on Three-Mile Island.

Myself and my organization, Wildlife Rescue, support the multi-use project as proposed by the Collier-Hoover foundation. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next is Carl McKenny.

000242 CARL McKENNY: First, let me thank the Air Force and the FAA for providing an opportunity to speak and commend you on the spirit and the manner in which the hearings have been conducted.

My name is Carl McKenny. I'm a professor

at the University of Miami and a Dade County resident for fifty-three years. Details of my qualifications will be included in a more extensive written submission. Because of time limitations, I'm using a prepared document.

In support of the regional airport plan, aside from any other aspects, three factors are evident and unchallenged.

First, in twenty years, regardless of new concourses, parking garages or control towers, both Miami and Hollywood/Fort Lauderdale International Airports will be at operational capacity.

Second, included in that, Monroe County, regardless of growth, will remain with a small commerical facility at Marathon and a little larger one at Key West. No suitable location in Broward, Dade County or Monroe County is available for an additional airport without severe and unacceptable ecological impact and potential damage.

Third, the property has existed as an airport for sixty-five years and has been the home at one time of B47s and B52 heavy jet bombers.

Given these factors, it seems to me that

to deliberately destroy an existing facility which would cost millions, if not hundreds of billions of dollars to replace, where there is a demonstrated need and no viable alternative, constitutes an ecological act that balances or exceeds its opposition.

I'm uncomfortable to find myself in disagreement with such fine world-wide organizations as the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society. I understand and empathize with their commendable passion in this matter, but I believe the better force is to work for greater environmental protection to enhance limitations and requirments in the transfer documents to Miami-Dade County.

I have five areas of concern that I will address in a detailed submission. First, I think more attention needs to be given to water run-off. We've had bad experiences over the years in Miami International in this regard and Biscayne Bay is pretty close. I don't think enough attention has been addressed to that.

Second, I think implementation of greater flight pattern restriction consistent with aviation safety are appropriate.

Third, and more importantly, because of the inevitable pressures for commerical build-up on airport periphery, we need to seek requirements to be enforced and engaged. Thank you, very much.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Francisco Fernandez.

000243 FRANCISCO FERNANDEZ: Thank you. My name is Francisco Fernandez and I need a translator.

(Through Juan E. Gandara, Sr. professional interpreter)

I come here on behalf of Cutler Ridge, Naranja, Perrine, Florida City and Homestead and others areas.

All of us know that after Andrew, our economy went down to the lowest point so that our population has to go to work in Miami and Hialeah. We don't know why we have to wait for eight years for this situation to be resolved.

We all love animals and we all love the environment, but the human race is also part of it. We believe that Homestead Air Force base can help to resolve all of the problems that we have in that particular area.

We hope that God will illuminate the minds of the people who oppose this and they will think about the people of the Homestead area and of the future of the Homestead area. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Eugene Scott.

000244 EUGENE SCOTT: Good afternoon. I'm a resident of Dade County since 1945. I retired from Environmental Resource Management in 1992. I was also an environmental engineer in the Miami International Airport for eight years.

So my concerns as a human factor concern is the pollution involvement in an airport. If you take the City of Hialeah and Miami Springs, the ground is so contaminated that the present water plant, they had one of the largest installations in the country and I think in the world of ground water that's being produced in those two water plants. And this had nothing to do with the airport. The airport had its own pollution extending into 36th Street and around the area, not that far from the Miami Springs Golf Course.

So this was from the airport that caused

this pollution. You can probably control what is in the airport maybe, but not really on the outside. When I left in 1992, they were pumping one million gallons of jet fuel from the Miami International Airport, three hundred and sixty-five million gallons of gas a year. You figure one percent of this if it was lost, what is that, three million six hundred gallons a year.

When I was there for the eight years, we recovered from the ground over a half million gallons and we thought that was wonderful. And they had all of the monitoring valves and what have you. You have giant fuel tanks

Our mangroves and now we have national parks, we never had before. All of these are potentials. I feel that we have Tamiami Airport and Opa-locka Airport and so the commuter airlines with the smaller planes could use these airports and cargo planes could use Miami International Airport.

But my concern is the human factor. And no matter with all the environmental laws involved, I found hydraulic fuel in monitoring valves at Miami International Airport. I'll leave it at that.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Janet Harper. Lawrence Ress.

000245 LAWRENCE RESS: Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Lawrence Ress. My question is, what about Opa-locka Airport. You have Gratigny Expressway to the south, directly to the south, you have 836 to the west and north within a mile, you have I-95 and the Florida Turnpike within three or four miles distance.

An area that needs development is the Northwest Dade County area. It has a high unemployment rate, much higher than Homestead. There is a need for community pride. I think we have a moral obligation to help that segment of the community.

Those who live in the Opa-locka region need help. Redevelopment should be taking place in Opa-locka instead of Homestead. Most of the infrastructure is there.

We should not destroy the natural integrity of South Dade with an airport in pursuit of the dollar. In my opinion, the region of land around Homestead is already rural or close enough to it, so a conversion back to the natural state

would be easier.

If the people of Homestead are in such dire straits, let them migrate north to Dade County where they can help and assist Opa-locka in development. There should be a partnership of some sort in the operations of Opa-locka Airport. I would hate to see this not thought of because of ethnic make-up.

The developer is in such a rush to build because they're afraid if the people really understand what's happening, the project will be aborted. This whole project stinks of backroom politics.

People are concerned about jobs. The developer cares little about future generations. Mixed-Use is something that destroys the natural area. I love to play golf, but we need another golf course like we need a hole in the head.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Next speaker is Roberta A. Fellabam.

000246 ROBERTA A. FELLABAM: I share the concerns for the two national parks which are known worldwide and for the congestion and noise

in the environment. I also share the concerns about keeping pollution out of Biscayne Bay. I'm not sure that we can do that well enough to avoid serious harm to the bay even if we are complying.

However, I'm even more concerned over the process of the contract for this airport without economic studies to determine optimum use of this property, economic growth and environmental protection.

As far as I know, there were no economic studies done prior to awarding the contract; therefore, we don't know if this airport is really the optimum use for this property as far as providing jobs, as far as providing economic growth and as far as protecting the environment. And in addition, as far as I know, the county did not follow the process which would require for everything before awarding this contract. And I think the Federal Government should be concerned about these issues before turning over this air base for any specific use. If the SEIS had been done prior to awarding the contract, we probably wouldn't be here today. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Rosalie E.

Leposky.

000247 ROSALIE LEPOSKY: I'm Rosalie Leposky and I've lived in Coconut Grove and have been here for quite a long time. I consider myself a supporter of conservation issues and I support the Miami-Dade County Airport.

There are far worse locations it could be considered for an airport. For fifty years, it's been in use as an Air Force base and I suspect with continued care, there is no reason not to continue to use it as an airport.

The only possible area of concern to me is related to the continued rising sea levels. A quick glance of the Environmental Impact Statement, it does not mention that.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Please, out with the phone. Do you want to repeat it.

ROSALIE LEPOSKY: The animals and bird life will adjust to the noise coming from the airport. The only possible area of concern to me is related to aviation use of the space and rising sea levels.

A quick glance of the Supplemental Environmental Impact statement does not mention high tide. Any long-time development of this land needs to consider these factors because of the slow but steady rising tides and the need in the near future. I will give you a copy of an article I wrote on the subject. Thank you for considering my thoughts.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: It will be attached to the record. Gary Bremen.

000248 GARY BREMEN: While I was trying to decide what I wanted to say, I ran through many alternatives. I thought of the impact of the proposed international airport, what impact would that have on my personal life and the immediate neighborhood.

I thought about the errors that I found reading through the SEIS, for example, with reference to the Redlands, the noise and visual impact. I wondered how accurate it is. I thought about addressing that so many outsiders were involved in this process. I was born and reared right here in Dade County. How dare they come and presume to know what is best for my backyard. But

that's a moot point.

It's not as many would have you believe, just a local issue. The treasures that we have are national treasures and all should have their say.

I, too, have experienced dolphins jumping in the water. I have witnessed pelicans soaring overhead. I have seen the clear waters of Biscayne Bay. I have felt the power of nature in the mist of the bay caught in a storm.

The alternatives are not expected to provide as many jobs, but given the fact that we really know so little how these national systems operate, we know so little about how the operations impact these systems, I believe that we need to do everything in our power to minimize even small impacts to the environment.

We need to protect our national treasure of Biscayne Bay and the Everglades with the Collier-Hoover alternative

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Mary Castellanos.

000249 MARY CASTELLANOS: Good afternoon, my name is Mary Castellanos and I'm a life-long

resident of Miami-Dade County and a Christian minister with a deep love of the Everglades.

I would like to first off thank the Air Force for its good stewardship of the Homestead area for all of these many years.

Now, as you know, the South Florida area has experienced incredible growth in the last thirty years, resulting in traffic gridlock, crowded schools and a high- stressed environment.

I find that the Everglades and Biscayne National Park are just about the only places where I can go to find peace and tranquillity and to restore my soul.

In two decades of bird watching and snorkling, I have seen a great deterioration of these two pleasures both in terms of damage to the coral reef and a substantial decrease in the bird population.

The report claims that an additional airport in Homestead will not do what it terms an unacceptable damage to the environment. I'm here to tell you passionately and unequivocally that at this stage of the deterioration, there is no such thing as an acceptable level of further insult to these fragile ecosystems. Urgent remedial action

is needed, not further damage to our precious environment.

Finally, I would like to point out that everywhere in this country where the false battle lines have been drawn between jobs and preservation, that when sanity has dictated that creation be preserved, jobs have also won out.

This false economy needs to be challenged. The airport is not the only source of jobs. Tourism is the number one business in Florida. Tourists are not going to come to dive amid dead coral or to fish with jets flying over their heads. We have a sacred responsibility to preserve this glorious environment.

In the name of my grandchildren and your grandchildren, I ask you to say no to the airport. Save the Everglades and Biscayne Bay. Let's make it a win-win situation for both the birds and the people of Naranja. Let's find a better alternative that will save the people and the parks. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Clemente Rodriguez.

000250 CLEMENTE RODRIGUEZ: Colonel McShane, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. My name is Clemente Rodriguez and I've lived in Miami-Dade County all my life.

I have fished in Biscayne Bay most of my life. I am opposed to the commercial airport for two reasons. First, I do not want to hear or see a constant barrage of commerical airplanes overhead while recreating in Biscayne Bay.

It's bad enough that when hunting or hiking in the Big Cypress National Preserve, I have to see and hear commercial airliners constantly doing takes-offs and circling overhead and landing at the Jetport.

Number two, with gross mismanagement going on at Miami International Airport, as outlined in the Miami Herald's series of articles recently, it's a little wonder that politicians are salivating for the opportunity of another gold mine. In fact, if I had my way, I wouldn't let any of the politicians manage a restroom, let alone another airport.

I support the Collier redevelopment plan for three reasons. Number one, it is environmentally friendly. Number two, it would

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also provide the much-needed jobs in Homestead. And last, but not least, it would allow us to obtain the oil and mineral rights in the Big Cypress National Preserve and limit oil exploration.

If facilities are truely needed, we can expand the facility at Opa-locka. I understand Opa-locka has an awful lot of excess land. I got the suggestion from a county employee as a matter of fact.

If not, put the airport in Broward county. Let Broward have the noise and pollution threats to the environment. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Evelio Medina.

000251 EVELIO MEDINA: My name is Evelio Medina. I woke up and I said what am I going to talk about. I left my office today and saw the picture that I have in my mind of the Air Force or Army people, that the day after Andrew, because they didn't speak Spanish to deliver the food, the migrant workers left because they were scared and came back and picked up the food.

I'm very in tune growing up in The Keys

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and know all of that area. We talk about the greedy and the bad developer. But then we see the beautiful Collier-Hoover foundation. They talk about the environment. Ladies and gentlemen, I tell you there is room for the Hoover and Collier plans.

All of land down there, we can turn into a beautiful economy for our tourists who come to this town. There is a gentleman here who sells furniture. Thank God, this lady, the older lady, Thank God we don't have a society that a mother can't speak.

The gentleman that eight years ago didn't speak when he was checking all of that dirty contamination, why didn't he talk about that eight years ago. The taxpayers were paying him and now pays his pension. He talks about it eight years later.

So what I'm getting at is very simple, the bottom line here is it's wrong, it's unadulterated what they are going to do to Dade County. Not only Dade County, but the whole area

And ladies and gentlemen, we should also live for the future of ourselves. We should also understand that we need prosperity in a way that

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birds and frogs can live also. You have to understand, ladies and gentlemen, we need something for that area. They say there is no more room and Homestead is the only viable place. So if it's a viable situation, let's do it right, let them go to Broward County.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Sergio Gomez.

000252 SERGIO GOMEZ: Thank you, very much. Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Sergio Gomez. I'm an engineer by trade. I was a member of the Armed Forces for seven years. I was a member of the Navy and I'm a member of the U.S. Naval Civil Engineers, which is related to the same branch as the Colonel is.

I believe that these issues are going to be resolved. The issues of Homestead Air Force Base have been properly addressed and I believe this airport is needed for this county.

Let me tell you what is happening now. There's a lot of competition as to trade that is coming into Florida. And right now, Jacksonville, Orlando and Tampa are competing to get that trade from Latin America. If we do not prepare

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ourselves to be ready for that trade, we are going to lose it and we are going to lose jobs.

We do need an airport and that airport is required for the big planes that carry the cargo. I have been inside of that base for many years and I know that the runway is built to hold 747s, that they used to hold the C-131s and the C-5s or the G-5s.

In any case, I also believe that this airport next to the water brings better safety for the coming of airplanes. And in addition to that, this airport is going to develop the economy. I buy from Homestead businesses and they need the jobs and require jobs. I also know the area south of the base, some areas that are commerical.

And if this airport is not developed correctly, I believe the environment issue is a legitimate issue. I, myself, enjoy the Everglades and enjoy Biscayne Bay. I use the marina every day -- not every day, but every week. I go out on my boat and I enjoy it. And I would support all of the environmental controls and I would be against any politician who would not use those environmental controls.

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, I do

believe that we need to support this issue. The Collier people are coming in with something that I don't know that it can be developed. I have seen some of these things. I don't believe they can be properly developed. So therefore let's take care of this issue properly. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Adrian Kates. Steve Reneger. Paul Haralson.

000253 PAUL HARALSON: My big concern is that we have a clear need for another airport. And in the future, this airport is going to assist in allevating a lot of congestion and traffic problems we're already starting to experience.

And anyone who lives here knows that we have been, as a community, somewhat short-sighted in terms of developing our infrastructure. We have to look at the recent growth of the city, that it is almost impossible if you try too late to build an infrastructure.

Our traffic gets worse and yet we don't build expressways. We don't build public transportation. Now we are going to have a problem with airport traffic. We know it's

coming.

We have a wonderful asset down in South Dade, a beautiful runway already in place. Why should we turn that down. It's being offered to the citizens of Dade County.

We shouldn't be short-sighted. If there were a good reason, a good environmental reason, then maybe I would agree. We already have extensive research showing that the environment isn't adversely affected.

And frankly, I think many of us who are here today either live or work within five miles of Miami International Airport. If I thought it was detrimental, I wouldn't live with my family within five miles of it.

Why should we have more facilities for alligators and birds. The Everglades are around that area. We should do for our own families, the people living and working around the airport.

We can have another airport and think toward the future. It's an asset that Dade County will have and we should take it if we can get it. And let's not let these environmental groups hurt our future. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: I've run through all of the cards I received except for one that was just handed to me.

What I propose to do at this time is go back and call the names of those that we skipped over earlier and see if they are here now.

State Representative Casiro Herrero. Afraid not. Mario Diaz. Not here. Mildred Terrill. Not here. Greg Ballinger.

000254 GREG BALLINGER: My name is Greg Ballinger. I'm a professor of biology at the University of Miami. I have a masters in sociology and I teach courses at Miami-Dade Community College. I'm basically here as myself.

I would like to first address a couple of issues in the SEIS itself. One is the data on the sound impact. The one thing that probably comes closest to measuring the impact that I relate to is time. It represents the eastern edges of Biscayne National Park one to two hours per day. Well, that doesn't sound too bad. But I don't perceive time over a twenty-four hour period. Like everybody else, I perceive it moment to moment.

If I go out and feed my birds or water my yard for ten minutes an hour and go back in the house, the birds will come back. If I go out every three minutes, I'm going to scare away the birds. What I think would be a more appropriate way of presenting this information is the frequency of disturbance, how often does the disturbance occur.

For example, two hours out of every twenty-four, I've got to tell you the airport is going to be running twenty-four hours. It's more than one minute out of every twelve minutes there will be an interruption. I think in terms of the animals, they're going to respond more to the frequency than to the total time over a twenty-four hour period.

Another issue I had with the report was the nitrogen. One of my problems is, all I can rely on right now is the summary. It seems in conflict with itself. In one paragraph it says there will be twenty-three percent more nitrogen from the air. But then in the biological resources, it says storm water discharge will occur, attributing to a high percent. Somewhere else, it talks about increase in the ammonia by

thirteen percent. Ammonia and nitrogen oxide or both.

I know if I had fertilizers in my yard, if I go too far, they would kill. I would like to see some verification of what is going on here with nitrogen. It talks about less than one percent of county emissions. That, to me, makes sense in a mediation document, an affirmative document. Who cares about what percents.

And the other issue of one percent county emissions is that the air quality or the earth quality in different parts of the county, north of Biscayne Bay is biologically much different than the southern end of Biscayne Bay. Thank you

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Janet Parker. Is she here now. Apparently not. Mariam Oppenheimer.

000255 MARIAN OPPENHEIMER: My name is Mariam Oppenheimer. I live on Miami Beach. I've lived here for quite a while, not as long as many. I'm here to take a completely different course, which is the course of no-action.

Not only am I against more development in

that area, I would like to see the public funds being used to return the Everglades to its pristine state. Consider water clarity and the cleanliness issue from the construction that they created over the past hundred years from a military system that's in the Everglades.

I say no airport, no duel use, no action. Take that airport base that's there and replant plant species where the old runways were. Thank you.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: We have finished with all of those who indicated they wanted to speak at the hearing. Has anyone else decided that you wish to make comments now for the record. I see one individual over there. Come up and state your name.

000256 DAVID BALLENTINE: My name is David Ballentine. I'm been here for forty-seven years. I've seen this town go from a small city to a big metropolis. Our elected officials seem to be building more and more and more dead-end streets because it's caused more pollution, more expenses and taxes go up. Moreover, it's going to take us

twenty years to build out what we've got now, as far as infrastructure and catch up with the building.

Airports are inherently polluters. There is no way that you can get around that. They're going to pollute the air and water and create noise pollution. If somebody says that it's not going to cause pollution, they're lying.

The Air Force Base down there is highly polluted. They've got a lot of field dumps down there that need to be cleaned up and need to be put back into a much more pristine condition and developed appropriately to save the area between the national parks and the air base down there.

An airport is not a feasable operation between the parks because of all of the pollution it's going to cause. I hope we can find something that is more suitable for that area and maybe move this whole operation to Opa-locka where they do have infrastructure in place.

JUDGE COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you, very much. Has anybody else decided you want to speak today. I don't see anybody.

I want to thank everyone for your

comments and for participating in this session of the public hearings. Your comments will be extremely helpful to the Air Force and other agencies in preparing the Final SEIS.

As we close, I do want to remind you that if you didn't comment today or you decide you have more to say, please write your comments down and leave them with the staff today or in the box on the comment table or mail them in later. Just make sure they are mailed by March 7th so they can be addressed in the Final SEIS.

Thank you, again, for attending. This hearing is adjourned at 2:45.

(The following private session was held:)

000257 JOSE MANUEL ALONSO: (Through Juan E. Gandara, Sr., professional interpreter)

I'm seventy-two years old. I have been in this country since 1966. When I came to this beautiful country, this was a countryside. With the contribution of us Cubans, we have made it possible to have this city.

The Homestead base was always an airport. The Miami International airport was very small.

And with our contribution and with the natural growth of this area, the airport has been growing more and more each day. I live in the northwest area and I'm within thirty blocks from the airport and we can't stand the situation as long as those cargo aircraft fly low in the morning, in the wee hours of the morning and the afternoon and the evening, too. It's very bad.

And everybody who has come to this country into exile looking for a better life for themselves, you know, the growth has increased tremendously and we can't even move around.

Moreover, when the Hurricane Andrew came and destroyed that entire area, of course it left them in a dire need of betterment. As a matter of fact, the Miami International Airport, they want to have a fourth runway. Where are they going to build it. They would have to close Northwest 36th Street.

So consequently, we need the relief airport to at least start helping with the cargo aircraft and this would help us all.

The environmentalists talk about crocodiles. They eat human beings. They are human crocodiles. My opinion is to go with the

airport because that is going to bring at least thirty-eight thousand jobs.

(Thereupon, the Public Hearing was concluded)

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF DADE

I, CAROLYN BURNS, Court Reporter, certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the above-entitled hearing and that the transcript is a true and complete record to the best of my ability.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, attorney, or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

Dated this 20th day of February, 2000.

CAROLYN BURNS
Court Reporter

Transcript of
Public Hearing

February 3, 2000
5:30 p.m.–11:25 p.m.

Renaissance Ballroom
5901 SW 8th Street
Miami, Florida

ORIGINAL

HOMESTEAD AIR FORCE BASE
SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT SCOPING MEETING
February 3, 2000
5:30 p.m. to 11:25 p.m.

5901 S.W. 8th Street
Miami, Florida

APPEARANCES:

Colonel Michael McShane,
Chief Trial Judge, Air Force

Major Mike Chipley,
Representative of the Air Force

Anthony Rivas, Interpreter

THEREUPON:

The following private statements were made:

000258 DAMARIE QUINTANA: My name is Damarie Quintana. I'm a citizen of Miami-Dade County. I'm going to try to be very brief in trying to make all my comments.

I believe we need employment and we need an airport in Miami-Dade. I feel these so-called environmentalists are being hypocrites and they're being backed up by the Collier/Hoover plan to knock out the airport and make room for they offices, parks and golf courses, which I don't see how that can work here in Miami-Dade. We have enough golf courses here.

I don't understand why the environmentalists don't see and understand that the study says that the airport won't harm the parks nor the animals. What they are saying about the study and our government? That's why I feel they really don't care about the environment. They're being paid. As to Secretary Bruise Babbitt, it has been reported that behind the scenes politically he has political connection to the Collier Family. How convenient.

And as far as people living around the airport, they won't be the first nor the last. I know several people that live close to Miami International Airport. Where do they expect to build airports? To be built in the middle of the desert?

Another subject that the environmentalists bring up is that it is impossible that local people are going to get all the 38,000 jobs they say they're offering the airport developers. What they don't know is those are also indirect jobs that will be throughout the community, new businesses and new job openings besides the airport.

Thank you.

000259 ROBERTO SALAS: My name is Roberto Salas. As a resident of Miami-Dade County, I'm here to support the Homestead Airport project.

From what I have read and the research I have done about this project, I have come to the conclusion that the environment is not going to be damaged, instead, we are going to have more jobs, more opportunity, and more choices to improve our transportation.

Let's get together and nothing

selfishly, but instead, come together for the betterment of all the people in our community and support the Homestead Airport.

The decision to make it a commercial airport will go a long way in making South Florida a livable place for all.

Thank you.

000260 FRANCICA RODRIGUEZ: I am in agreement with the development for the airport. I believe it's the best for the community. In order to obtain jobs and prosperity.

000360 SARA GOMEZ: I believe that the airport is good because the opportunity for jobs are going to be available because lack of jobs is what brings delinquency and crime.

Above that, this is not only about the airport itself, it is towards the development for the community. People who live here have left for Orlando and Tampa because of the lack of opportunities here.

I believe that the environment with birds and animals, whatever it is, has nothing to do with our needs. We have lived together all of this time, nothing has happened. I love animals. I have two little pet dogs who are like my children.

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Everything is good, the life of the little pets, children, family, and environment.

Thank you.

000261 GLADYS GARCIA: I'm in favor of the development of the airport in Homestead. I believe it's going to bring very good opportunity of employment in the area and it's going to bring some decongestion of the Miami Airport because it is saturated. And it's going to bring opportunity of work for the area of Homestead, and Homestead needs them badly.

That is all.

000262 ESTRELLA BATEMAN: My name Estrella Bateman and I reside at 2170 Southwest 122nd Court, Miami-Dade County, Florida.

I have come here today to express my support for the proposal of developing Homestead Air Force Base into a commercial airport. I think that a second airport is much needed, as presently Miami International Airport is very congested and this situation is going to get worse, not better. I believe a second airport will benefit the entire community, especially Homestead, which is in much need of assistance, and the devastation due to Hurricane Andrew.

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A second airport will generate thousands of jobs for this community which will create great economic benefits and growth, and I think the SEIS study has confirmed the building of this airport is environmentally safe to our Everglades and Biscayne Bay, and I am very much in favor and support of this.

Thank you.

000263 CARL GOMEZ: My name is Carl Gomez. I'm a resident in Miami-Dade for 40 years, and I go in favor for the airport to be built in Homestead. We need the jobs in our community. Studies show that the airport won't harm the parks, or the Everglades. I don't see the Hoover Group can do any better than what they can do with the airport.

Thank you.

000264 GUSTAVO E. LANNES: I'm in favor of the development for the base for commercial airport because the airport was already constructed. The area was already taken care of, and also because the construction of the airport will have in place 38,000 jobs, and many more indirectly or directly related to that.

In regards to the noise related directly to the animals, Homestead Air Force Base was there

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for ten years at least, and they had the same or even more noise than before. Military aircrafts are noisier than commercial aircrafts, and I do believe that for the development of the community of South Florida the airport is good. And also because of the competition, as we say always that we're going to open the port of the Americas in Miami. Florida would be the only, and Miami for that matter, would be the only place which could say that they have both ports, commercial and civil airports.

I believe that is enough.

000265 ALEXANDRA MALINOVSKY: I just feel that the Air Force Base should be -- I'm in favor of the mixed redevelopment of the base development plan.

And I think that Dade County officials, you know, I am against the fact that they have not offered the development to outside contractors, basically for the commercial airport. I think that they have given, you know, favorite status to certain developers, and this is what I'm voting against.

I think that the county should look into using Opa-Locka as a commercial cargo airport, since that's already an existing facility, and I think we should look into protecting the environment as much

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as possible.

Thank you.

000266 GORDON TRACY NANCE: A couple of points I want to make where I can speak is that a lot of people think that this area is very pristine and as a nature preserve it's beautiful, and I would just like to remind them that it's that way despite the fact that planes have been flying in and out of there for 40 years.

I first went to Homestead Air Force Base and landed a jet there myself in 1959 and I'm not aware how long the base was in use before then, but from 1959 on it's been mostly in constant use with thousands of take-offs and landings a year. So the area surrounding it has stayed pristine in spite of the fact that there's an airport there.

I notice that when I fly to New York or Boston that flying times listed in the airline schedules are 30 minutes longer than they used to be. That's not because the planes are slower, it's because the congestion on the ground requires another 30 minutes for planes to maneuver on and off the ground, and this time is only going to increase as time goes on, and the congestion is only going to build.

More important factor in needing a new airport here is the safety factor. We had a DC-8 that took off from Miami International on the west runway a few years ago, and it crashed, luckily with only one fatality on the ground. But had we had the easterly winds that normally prevail here that day, the plane would have been taking off to the east and would have crashed in a very populated area. And the airlines take off and fly right over some schools and even Jackson Memorial Hospital, and if we have a tragedy in the future in this congested area, it's going to be of major proportion. So the more traffic we can shift to an isolated area, the better we'll be.

I know that some opponents to this say that it would be terrible to have a plane crash in Biscayne Bay as far as the environment is concerned, but that fails by comparison to what damage would be done if it crashed in a concentrated area or a congested area.

So that's all I wanted to say.

000267 MARTHA M. SEOANE: My name is Martha Seoane, and I have lived in Miami-Dade County for 30 years, all my life actually. My address is 1421 Northwest 36th Avenue, which is just east of the

Miami International Airport and in alignment with the runways and the flight patterns. So I've had planes flying over my home and my neighborhood constantly.

I can definitely say one becomes immune to the airplane noise, it really just isn't a problem nor a hazard and it has never created any sort of health ailments in my family nor anybody in my neighborhood, as other people may say otherwise.

I would also like to address how I feel about the Collier project. The Collier Family has never really been considered environmentally concerned. They have just over two dozen oil exploration permits to drill near the Big Cypress National Preserve, which is just north of the Everglades National Park, and this just took place no later than 1997. So I don't believe that they are very concerned about our environment. So I don't think that they're going to really take care of it.

Plus, if by disgrace to our community the Collier Project is approved, there will still be a military reserve base with 20,000 flights yearly. So, in my opinion, the only logical solution is to grant South Florida a supplemental airport for cargo

and commercial flights. The Miami International Airport is in great need of some assistance.

000268 KARINA BECERRA: Hi, Karina Becerra. And it's hard to, like, put a whole history of my life and of the earth in three minutes, but I think that there needs to be a shift in paradigm thinking, like how there have been, you know, like throughout history.

And a lot of people are not educated to care about the environment. It's only that, it's just ignorance, it's nothing else. It's not their fault. It's actually everybody's fault. We need to, like, educate the community to take care of the environment, because we are connected to the environment and whatever happens to the environment is going to ultimately affect us.

And I don't understand how some people don't know that, it's so strange and so weird to me, but I just think an airport would incredibly, like, damage the eco-system so close to a national park.

We don't value them right now because life is so abundant, but it's not always going to be like that, and I grew up in a country here, you know, where nature was always such a big part of my life, and it's not always going to be there, and we

have to think about our children to come. When they live, they're not going to be able to enjoy it because as of now resources are going down ever so quickly.

So if it's a job problem, we need to find a way. I don't have the alternative or solution for it. I'm just voicing an opinion for those who don't have a voice, which is eco-systems, animals, nature in general.

That's it.

000269 ADOLFO HENRIQUES: I'm Adolfo Henriques. I happen to be sitting right now on the Blue Ribbon Task Force Committee for the Airport that was appointed by the mayor. I've spent a great deal of time looking at the issues that impact our existing airport system here in Miami, and quite frankly, first of all, I believe that the study that was done supports the fact that the airport in South Dade at the Homestead Air Force Base is totally compatible with the eco-system; that it is not going to be an ecological problem; that we certainly will need the additional airport capacity as we go forward because Miami International Airport will be maxed out in the not too distant future and there are no other compatible sites within Miami-Dade County to

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accommodate an additional airport facility, other than this one.

This will be a huge employment creator for the South Dade market that absolutely needs it at this point in time.

Thank you.

000270 MARIA PAPAZIAN: My name is Maria Papazian. Good afternoon. I would like to make a comment first in English and then in Spanish.

I am here to express my opposition to the construction of the proposed commercial airport in the former Homestead Air Base. I'm concerned about the amount of air, land, and water pollution and sound pollution that the proposed commercial airport will represent. It is too much noise and it is too much for a sensitive and unique area.

Another concern that I have is it's in proximity to Turkey Point, and Biscayne National Parks. It represents too high of a risk to take with our environment and our health.

For these reasons I believe it is necessary to find alternatives to the development of a commercial airport, which threatens the peace and tranquility that our national parks offer. Simply the quality of our life will be deteriorated.

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000271 REY MARTINEZ: My name is Rey Martinez. My office address is 7000 Southwest 97th Avenue, Suite 104, Miami, Florida 33173.

I'm here on behalf of the development for the Air Force Base being turned into a commercial airport. I think that we have heard enough from our mayors, our commissioners, state representatives who are the ones that actually voiced what the people want in the area. And I think they have all spoken, except for maybe one commissioner, that they are in favor of this plan.

The plan has gone through several scrutinies, SEIS, meaning the last one, which is the state of the art investigation that was done for the development of the commercial airport, the findings I think are very clear and concise in the sense that they are for the development. That is really the only rational way to develop the Homestead Base in the sense of being a commercial airport. That will give them the flexibility also to keep the runway for their private use either for the military or for the law enforcement agencies that will need to use it at any given time.

I think the fact that the SEIS report has stated, and that's what I base my decision on,

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one of the reasons I base my decision on for the development, that is the most sensible thing to do with the base at this moment.

Of all the plans that have been put in place, this one is the one that will be better for the area. It creates the most jobs. The land stays in the public ownership of Miami-Dade County, and it will be leased to private investors to develop the base and other things such as industry, warehouses, shopping centers, office space, hotels, and the amount of money that it would generate to the area is what the people want.

The Collier/Hoover Plan basically puts the ownership of the land in private hands of the Collier Family, which is a multi-million dollar family, and what they're doing is they're swapping mineral oil rights, which would take billions of dollars by the county to be able to extract any oil from the national park, if any, because it's all speculative, and to place public owned land in the hands of a private family, I just don't see that. You're giving something for nothing. Those oil rights are totally worthless. It's like in California where they haven't gotten nothing out of it, and it happened in another state, I forgot right

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now.

As far as the space craft thing, that's extremely speculative. There's no developer set for it. So the only thing that could happen at this moment, the only thing that can really happen in Homestead and Naranja Lakes for a commercial airport for the betterment and benefit of the people.

People that come from Monroe County to protest, the ones from Ocean Reef, the average house is worth 1.5 million dollars. Why don't they take their money and give it to the poor folks in Florida City, Naranja Lakes and Homestead?

That's it. Thank you.

000272 RALPH PUIG, JR.: You know, usually when there's something new happening in a city or in a county, there's always people that are for and against a project, and that's only normal. But looking at this project, the scope of it, the original intent of the project has always been an airport, and I'm for the project because there is so many opportunities that could be for the community, not only for professionals, but for the people, public in general.

There's a lot of issues that have to do with the environment, but I think those have been

addressed already. There's been studies showing that the impact of this airport as a commercial airport, the impact is minimum. It's just going to benefit everybody for the future generations of Dade County. It's going to make Homestead a major, and I quote, "major city."

What I see is a city that's going to be internationally known. It's going to relieve traffic flow going through the Miami Airport. It will create opportunity for the education, I believe so, because it's going to be a lot of money invested, the taxes and so forth that are going to be coming from this project. You'll have better schools. Definitely you'll have better roads, because they're going to have to be improved. It's just a great opportunity for the development of the whole county in itself, and for the State of Florida.

And I think that people are missing the point and the issue, bringing the issue of the environment, because that's one of the most important things, of course, the environment. And I think the group that is handling this, the people that are in favor of the project are very aware of that, and I just hope that this whole process pretty

soon comes to a conclusion, because it's been a long process and I think they've taken all the steps necessary to show and demonstrate, not only to the county, but to the public in general, that it is a group of people that do care about the environment, care about certain issues that the position has, and I just hope it gets approved. Everybody is going to be benefited from it, and it's just a great project.

Thank you.

000273 OTTO FERNANDEZ: My name is Otto Fernandez. I own a property - I just recently owned the property on 19940 Southwest 240th Street, and I have several crops which I plant and develop.

One of the reasons that I moved into the area was because of the solitude of the area. That will all be changed as result of the commercializing of the Homestead Base, which is only going to benefit all these people that have been here prior to me. The developers, the Latin Builders Developers Association, or whatever, and that they are going to, if you let them, they will pave Florida from the East Coast to the West Coast. I know that because I work for the postal service, and I deliver to the new developments, the new developments that they are undertaking now, and I

see that the quality of the property, not to mention the incapability of the new people that are moving to the area to pay the mortgages and you can tell that by the extreme amount of for sale signs. It will definitely benefit the people that work in construction, but in reality, it will benefit mostly the land developers who have no problem with paving Florida from the East Coast to the West Coast.

Now, I repeat, an airport development there, I happen to work next to Tamiami Airport, and the fall out from the flight-overs, which happens to be only, et cetera, et cetera, small planes damage the paint on the cars.

Now, if you have a commercial airport, such as the Miami Airport, half of that, the fallout of the flights is enough to pollute and destroy the eco-system and the Everglades and all that area, not to mention, we get our water from that area there, that will completely pollute. And who's going to pay for that? Well, down the road, somebody is going to pay for that.

I think this is all a gimmick from the dictator, Alex Penelas, that wants to control everything around here. I am very much opposed to his ubiquitous presence and he is now like a little

dictator, and he has the control of all these developers here who, just their own idea is to forget, destroy now. My farm goes down and that's all I have to say.

Thank you very much.

000274 BEATRIZ QUINTANA: My name Beatriz Quintana. I live in South Dade. I'm with the people that want to make the airport, because I think Dade County needs an airport. There's not enough jobs in Dade County. And I also have a business in Fort Lauderdale, which is hard, because I could, you know, if it was something in Homestead, I could not find a business in Homestead, it's very hard to do anything in Homestead.

Thank you.

000275 EDIE DRIEST: Hi. I'm glad to be here to be able to express my opinion. I hope it's heard.

I definitely don't want to see this Air Base become developed. I don't know why Fort Lauderdale just can't be utilized for the additional need for air traffic. This proposed airport is, as we know, next to a few national parks that cannot survivor with the pollution that is caused by the airport, not to mention the noise, not to mention

the human beings that are affected by this type of development as well.

Right now I live near downtown Miami under and air corridor, which is a miserable experience. Why do we have to keep bringing more of this in?

And the nuclear plant needs to be considered, obviously. I don't know if it's possible to make such a thing crash proof. So that's very close to the airport.

The marine life would be affected in a negative way. The water nearby would be affected.

There are alternatives I don't think we've looked at. One maybe is the Hoover development, and I think that's it. And I hope and pray that this is looked at very carefully and the quality of our life is examined.

000276 ROBERTO GARCIA: My name is Robert Garcia, and I live in the South Dade area, and the reason why I like this, to go through with this, number one, it relieves a lot of stress to the MIA airport traffic. It also gives liberty for 38,000 people for jobs. Plus, the ability for our properties to go up, sales prices on our properties to go up.

Also, it helps people that want to travel not have to travel so far away to get to the airport.

Also, the economy is something that's going to be affected and at least the City of Homestead would once be recognized as a city in itself, rather than to be recognized as the City of Miami.

Thank you.

000277 SYLVIA GARCIA: Hi. I'm Sylvia Garcia, I own Capital Title. I'm an owner of a small business and I welcome the opportunity for not only 38,000 jobs for workers down in Homestead or for the City of Miami, or South Florida alone, but I also welcome the opportunity for investors to have an opportunity for growth in South Florida.

We've become a mecca of all different kinds of investment opportunities for not only people who live here, but also for Florida nationals. I think not only for job investments, but I think for the growth and potential that South Florida has is a definite plus for this airport.

In addition, I think the congestion of MIA will alleviate this. It will alleviate most of the, I think, security problems that we have at MIA,

but it will also give an expansion or a different alternative as opposed to just MIA.

The opportunity for an additional airport here will give Miami a better outlook for visitors, as well as people that want to come and live here as opposed to leaving South Florida.

I think the best opportunity for South Florida will be to have an expansion of a better and attractive airport, and I think that will be a great solution and a great contribution to South Florida. So I really hope that this airport comes our way. It's something to look forward to the future. We're only getting bigger and better, and that will definitely make us a better city.

Thanks.

000278 PETER FISCHEL: My name is Peter Fischel. I would like to make a comment.

I'm a long time South Florida resident. And I recently, three years ago, purchased property down in the Redlands area. I would like to say I'm opposed to the development of the Air Force Base as a commercial airport for three basic reasons.

One, I don't believe it's a comprehensive community development plan. I think it's more for the benefit of a few business people

rather than everyone else. I also think it's going to be detrimental to the community in that it's going to be a shifting the use away from what I think is desirable or a better uses, say from agriculture to industry.

I believe a lot of people in the community will not see the benefits. There will be exporter benefits or basically the problems associated with the development would be much greater than any benefit they'll see. For example, the other three regional airports are in less desirable areas. My.

Second reason is I think it's environmentally damaging. It's inconsistent with the use of the local environment. Obviously it's situated between two national parks. I'm sure there will be plenty of comments on that. I don't believe it's a benefit of the national parks.

Also, it's going to increase the pressure from development in the area, both commercial and residential. Obviously you have a limited amount of space left for natural areas in South Dade and I think those are more important than short-term economic benefits. So not only will we see more development, see decrease in quality of the

area.

The third reason I'm opposed to the airport is I think that we could do a better use of the area. I think it would be better to put all plans on hold and develop a great comprehensive region-wide redevelopment plan that will benefit all members of the community rather than spearhead and push this through as a short-term economic gain for a few.

000279 ROBERT CHISHOLM: My name is Robert Chisholm, architect. My office is at 7254 Southwest 48th Street, Miami, Florida.

By education and profession I'm an architect and urban planner, urban designer and I practice both on a full-time basis in Miami and in other areas of the country and the world.

I am in favor of the HABDI proposal for the redevelopment of the base. I think that any community must continue its economic enhancement growth in order to supply its residents with the necessary economic and social opportunities and development.

We have the technology in the United States and in the world to be able to coexist with the natural environment and the natural habitat and

all species along with mankind.

If it was in our hearts and intentions to develop this project in the proper and necessary manner, we have the capability to do so technologically and professionally.

A development of this nature at the former Homestead Air Force Base would be beneficial to the area, would be a benefit to Miami International Airport as a relief airport, and it would be extremely beneficial economically for the residents of South Dade, which is our next opportunity area for growth, short of higher density development in the UBD of Dade County.

Current and future development of aircraft equipment, it's coming into line that we'll have reduced noise levels. That is part of the future development in aircrafts, which is at hand. And all the environmental concerns, again, can be easily solved.

I have done projects in South Dade and on the base, and I am familiar with the economic and planning issues of the area, therefore, I recommend the HABDI proposal.

Thank you.

000280 NANCY MORENO: My name is Nancy Moreno.

I've been a resident of Miami-Dade County since 1962. I am in favor of building the airport and Homestead, because I remember the Air Force Base a long time ago. I believe this new airport will create a lot of jobs for unemployed people and will enhance the City of Homestead immensely with all the new businesses that are going to open around them.

I also heard that the Homestead branch of the Baptist Hospital will be closing because it has no business. With this airport it won't be able to close because people will go there and also the MIA, the Miami International Airport is very congested, and the fares are very high. Every time I fly I have to go to Fort Lauderdale because the fares there are lower. If there's an airport in Homestead, it will be closer to me and airlines with lower fares will move there.

Also, I have lived 20 years across from the Miami Airport where there's a lake with manatees and birds all around it, and nothing has ever happened to them. So I don't think that the pollution issue and the environmental issue has anything to do with it.

That's my opinion on this issue.

000281 STEVE HAGEN: My name is Steve Hagen.

I'm a businessman, I'm also an environmentalist. I live in the takeoff pattern of MIA, and I do benefit from having an airport close to me, because I'm cargo, I use the cargo facility as an importer.

In one hand, I would love to have traffic relieved from MIA and taken to some other airport. However, in this instance, I believe that would be a disastrous decision to be made.

I quote the last paragraph from the Department of the Interior.

It says: "The Air Force's goal is to dispose of this surplus property in a manner that supports local community plans for economic revitalization of South Florida and protects Biscayne Bay and the nearby national parks."

Now, the key in this sentence, and I assume that this was all very thoughtfully derived at, is "local community", "to best preserve support the community plans for the revitalization of South Florida."

An airport is a regional type of facility, therefore, and the location of it, especially between two national parks would be disastrous and not nice.

I fully support a mixed-use plan, as the

Department of Interior has suggested.

000282 TERE GARCIA: There's one thing that South Florida economy depends on and that is air travel.

I am here on behalf of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Transportation Group. The Chamber has supported on record the conveyance of the Base to the County and to the airport, and it has also approved the use of it as a reliever military and passenger airport. This means to be planned accordingly as to mitigate any negative impacts that it may have, but we must remember that historically this was a military airport.

This is the time to move ahead with this, given the result of the EIS. We need the jobs, and we need our aviation industry to continue growing and providing for the county the type of economic growth that it deserves.

000283 NICHOLAS ROBULOCK: What do we want first? What is more important to us? The jobs that are going to be provided by an airport, faster transportation, more available transportation, or do we want to have green grass? We don't even know who gave it to us, it's much more precious than the airport that we can build.

By building this airport, it's going to destroy it. It's going to demolish it. It's going to pollute it. And that forest is much more important than an airport, much more important than faster transportation, much more important than providing jobs for people.

The silence of trees and the silence of nature, the silence of animals, the silence of nature is something we have to carry on to our kids. We can't carry on airports. We can't carry on polluted waters, polluted sewers. We need to maintain our forests for our kids. We need to keep the grass green, the water wet, clean.

Thank you.

000284 EILEEN SMITH: Please don't let our children, the children of Florida, and the children of the world grow up without an Everglades and without a Biscayne Bay. Allow the next generation and more to hear the call of the Osprey and the grunt of the alligator and maybe even the roar of a Florida panther, this will be music to their ears. The deafening noise of one aircraft flight per minute is no legacy to look at.

I believe we can have jobs and quality of life. Please support the Collier plan. It was

once said the Everglades was a test and if we passed, we get to keep the planet. Now, the airport is a test, if we stop it, we pass, and we get to keep the Everglades and more.

Margery Stoneman Douglas passed away last year and she was the first lady of Florida and of the Everglades. She fought this battle against an airport.

Once again, let's win it again, in her memory and for the future of her children.

Thank you.

THEREUPON:

The following public proceedings were had:

COLONEL McSHANE: I do have a couple of administrative announcements before we get started.

If you brought signs or banners into the room, I would ask that you do not raise them up from your seats. You will be blocking someone else's view, and that will be appropriate. Don't do that.

One thing I've seen in the several hearings we've had here, there are an awful lot of you that have cell phones. They are very distracting when they ring, so please turn the ringers off and put them on vibrate or just turn the

phones off completely so that you do not disturb the proceedings with your cell phones. If you're doing that when we have speakers up here, I will ask you to leave.

We do have the capability to translate my comments and the briefing that Major Chipley will give tonight into Spanish. If there is any interest in having that done. Doing so, however, will take away about 15 minutes from the public comment period. We would be happy to do the translation, if there is interest.

Could I have a show of hands if you are interested in having the translation into Spanish?

I only see one hand, and somebody's offered to translate for her. I think it's probably best if we maximize the time available for the comment period.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this public hearing on the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on the disposal of portions of the former Homestead Air Force Base.

I'm Colonel Mike McShane, and I'm the Chief Trial Judge of the Air Force, stationed at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington D.C.

My normal duties include presiding over Air Force courts marshal, but this week I have been made available to preside over this series of five hearings which are being held in this area concerning the disposal and subsequent reuse of former Homestead Air Force Base property.

I have not been involved in the development of any of the proposals that are being considered. My job is to make sure that we have a fair and orderly hearing.

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to come here tonight for this public hearing. If you are interested in doing so, I hope you took the time to visit with the technical staff prior to this portion of the hearing and to look at the exhibits that are in the back and along the side.

In preparing this draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, or draft SEIS as you will hear us refer to it all night, it was the Air Force's goal to understand the environmental implications of deciding for what purpose and to whom to convey surplus property at former Homestead Air Force Base.

The draft SEIS examines reasonable ways

in which the property might be developed and used and the reasonably foreseeable environmental consequences of the alternatives.

At this time I would like to introduce Major Mike Chipley of the Air Force Executive Issues Team. He is an engineer by trade with a Ph.D in civil engineering from the University of Colorado.

Major Chipley will discuss the proposed action and alternatives and provide a short synopsis of the reuse issues. Since the overall purpose of these hearings is to obtain input from you on the contents of the draft SEIS, the presentation will be short.

Major Chipley?

MAJOR CHIPLEY: Thank you, Colonel McShane. I too would like to extend my thanks for all of you taking time to provide your comments on the draft SEIS.

For the past several years we have been engaged in the process of completing realignment and reuse of the former Homestead Air Force Base as required by the Defense Waste Closure and Realignment Act.

The Air Force's primary goal in this process is to transfer the property in a manner that

supports local plans for local revitalization for South Florida and protects Biscayne Bay and the nearby national parks. A disposal must also be compatible with the continuing existing military and law enforcement missions.

The Air Force and the Federal Aviation Administration, or FAA, are the designated lead agencies for the draft SEIS. The Air Force has a decision-making responsibility for the transfer of the property. The FAA has the decision-making responsibilities for airport facilities.

There are three cooperating agencies, one cooperating agency is the National Park Service, because it manages Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park. Another cooperating agency is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service because of its responsibilities to ensure threatened and endangered species are adequately considered and because of the proximity of the Crocodile Lake, National Wildlife Refuge.

The third cooperating agency is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency because of its regulatory responsibilities.

The contractor hired by the Air Force to actually conduct the analysis is Science

Applications International Corporation or SAIC for short. They have been supported by another contractor, Landerman, Brown, which performed the airport's planning and noise analysis.

I would like to take a couple of minutes to update you on the SEIS process, and what has occurred since the scoping period ended in July of 1998. More than 440 individuals, organizations, and agencies provided written input during our 132-day scoping period and 195 people spoke at our public scoping meetings. The size and complexity of the draft SEIS has grown substantially because of the number and diverse nature of issues and because of the many federal agencies, state and local governments, private organizations, and concerned citizens involved. Midway through the analysis two mixed-use proposals were received which were incorporated into the analysis.

We recognize that this has been a long process for everyone. We want you to know that many other communities have also struggled through the base closure process. Some former bases have been developed for aviation uses, others for non-aviation uses. The success of redevelopment depends upon the local community involvement and support.

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The draft SEIS examines a number of reuse alternatives for remaining surplus property at the former base. Ongoing reuse involving property that has already been transferred, like the Job Corp Center, the Dade County Homeless Trust, the regional park and other deeded properties would continue under any of the alternatives.

The alternatives underwent thorough and complex analysis of the environmental and economic impacts that could potentially occur as a result of redevelopment. 14 topics were used as the basis for the analysis. Public and agency concerns that were expressed at our scoping meetings identified important issues that helped focus our analysis. Those concerns have been incorporated throughout the draft SEIS.

When the reuse planning process was initiated for Homestead Air Force Base, Miami-Dade County was designated as a local reuse authority to develop a reuse plan for the former base. The county has proposed that the 1,632 acres of remaining surplus property at former Homestead Air Force Base be transferred to Miami-Dade County Aviation Department for development of a commercial airport. This is the proposed action addressed in

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the draft SEIS.

The analysis of the proposed action included identifying and assessing new flight tracks that would be used at the commercial airport. Airport operations, in general, are characteristically different in commercial or residential land uses in the types and numbers of vehicles, equipment and people, and the resulting impacts on the environment. The main issues of the proposed action involve air pollution, storm water runoff, and noise levels.

Another alternative examined in the draft SEIS is a commercial space port. The main issues with the commercial space port alternative involve the uncertainties related to the licensing process, safety, and potential increases in noise.

Three approaches were examined for non-aviation use presented as the mixed-use alternative. Market driven development, the Collier Resources Company proposal, and the Hoover Environmental Group Plan. The mixed-use alternatives could create higher intensity of use in a shorter period of time, but may have less environmental effects on the national parks.

The draft SEIS also includes the

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no-action alternative, which means the property continues to belong to the government and reverts to caretaker status.

Under each alternative the Air Force, the Florida International Guard, and Customs Service continue to use the runway for their current military and law enforcement missions.

The draft SEIS addresses each alternative in the context of future growth in South Florida and also takes into account potential cumulative impacts of other projects. It also includes some historical information where available.

Your views and comments on the draft SEIS will be important as we work toward completing the final SEIS. We are now about halfway through the 60-day public comment period. We scheduled these hearings to provide you an opportunity to review the draft SEIS and formulate comments you can give here today and also to provide some time after these hearings so that you can incorporate things that you might hear tonight into written comments. Whether you choose to comment today or to provide your comments in writing between now and March 7th, we look forward to receiving your inputs in

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assisting us in completing the final document.

The final SEIS scheduled for completion in July, 2000 will include comments made at the public hearings or submitted in writing during the public comment period for the drafted SEIS, along with Air Force and FAA responses to your comments.

A decision on what action will be taken concerning the transfer of the disposal property will be made no earlier than 30 days after the publication of the final SEIS. We'll continue to distribute news releases and send news letters to those on our mailing list throughout the final course of the SEIS process. Anyone wishing to be added to the mailing list should complete an attendance card located in the foyer at the registration table and check the appropriate box on the card.

In summary, I would like to say that we do understand that this is a complicated and often frustrating process. Let me reiterate that neither the Air Force, nor the FAA proposes to directly develop the surplus property. The Air Force's goal is to transfer the land in a manner that supports local plans for economic revitalization and protects Biscayne Bay and the nearby national parks. A

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disposal must also be compatible with continuing the existing military and law enforcement missions.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you, Major Chipley.

Each of the proponents of an alternative was offered the opportunity to describe the proposal and speak about it. Miami-Dade County representatives have been given 10 minutes to speak about their proposal. You may also have noticed that some of the other proponents, although they elected not to give a presentation, have material available at tables at the back of the room.

I understand Mayor Penelas will start the Miami-Dade County presentation.

MAYOR PENELAS: Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. Let me start off by thanking both you, Colonel McShane, and Major Chipley for the fashion in which you've conducted these hearings over the last few days. I think we all owe them a round of applause.

On behalf of Miami Dade County this evening I'm joined by our aviation director, Gary Dellapa, and Bill Johnson from the manager's office, and they will be saying a few words after I am done.

My testimony tonight, Ladies and

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Gentlemen, and for the record, and folks on the issue of providing South Miami-Dade County with an environmentally balanced foundation for both growth and improved economic viability, and I strongly believe that both of these goals can be achieved through the redevelopment of the former Homestead Air Force Base as a limited commercial airport.

I cannot over emphasize the importance of this base property in meeting Miami Dade County's future aviation capacity needs. Miami International Airport is the only commercial service airport in Miami-Dade County. Even with a current addition of a fourth runway, Miami International Airport will fall far short of the demand of the commercial services capacity sometime between the year 2006 and 2015.

This point was clearly confirmed in the recent Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and, as we all know, aviation facilities do not materialize over night. They are decades in planning, regulatory and implementation phases.

I would further add that a commercial airport at the former Homestead Air Force Base also meets the pressing economic needs of South Miami-Dade County. The airport use will provide far

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more good jobs than any of the alternative uses, 38,000 jobs and full build out in over one billion dollars in new earnings, as substantiated in the Supplement Environmental Impact Statement.

At the beginning of my remarks I spoke about balancing the needs of economic development with those of environmental protection. As mayor of Miami-Dade County, I want the record to be very clear that this project has my unwavering commitment to the development of Homestead Regional Airport in an environmentally safe manner. Over 27 mitigation plans and studies at a cost of over 8 million dollars have already been completed to ensure that Homestead Regional Airport is totally compatible with its environment.

It is important to know here that growth is projected to occur in the South Miami-Dade County area with or without reuse of the disposal property at the former Homestead Air Force Base, but we are prepared to deal with a growth in a responsible manner. In fact, the superintendent of Biscayne National Park has identified that wild resources, buffer land, and noise as the most serious potential impacts from outside the park. Here is our progress report on mitigating these impacts.

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First, Miami-Dade County has committed to the concept of a buffer zone around this to minimize the impacts of secondary development supported by federal, state and regional governments. We will address this need head on. We'll also continue to hold the line on the urban development boundary the legislative initiative which I strongly support.

Thirdly, our storm water drainage system for the base will comply with the strict regulations set forth by the South Florida Water Management District.

Four, our noise mitigation and management plan will consider the date it develops in Biscayne National Park's sound-scape plan to further understand noise issues.

Fifth, a mitigation plan for military canals being developed, initiative I supported in several communications to the federal government.

Sixth, Miami-Dade County is committed to the redevelopment of the former Homestead Air Force Base as a single runway facility.

And, seven, my final pledge to you, is that Miami-Dade County will seriously consider returning 39 square miles of precious land and

attended middle rights in the Big Cypress Preserve area to the Federal government.

As you all may know, that land is currently the site for the Dade Collier TMT airstrip. That site, if this proposal is approved, will be forever abandoned to close the hole in the donut if our proposal to develop Homestead Regional Airport in an environmentally sensitive manner is adopted by the federal government.

Thank you for your attention. At this time I would ask Gary Dellapa to continue Miami-Dade County's presentation.

Gary?

GARY DELLAPA: Thank you. I too would like to thank the panel for giving us the opportunity to relay our Department's recommendations regarding the development of the former Homestead Air Force Base. It's important for everyone to bear in mind that I'll be talking about capacity issues. And those are not issues that just affect South Dade or even Miami-Dade County, they affect all of South Florida.

Previous testimony you've heard from the mayor and other elected officials on what the position of reuse means, this should continue the

prosperity of our region.

The current system of airport is taxed to the extreme of its limits and will prove unable to meet future market demands, unless augmented by new facilities.

On the rear here, actually to my left, the airport has a display with documents and graphics on future aviation demand and our capacity to meet that demand. It is imperative that you understand that our inability to meet market driven demands means loss of economic activity and serious impacts on our employment base and business community.

Many of you are aware of our efforts to accelerate the construction of a fourth runway at MIA. This project is the single most important element of the Airport Department's long range development program. However, this final incremental gain in MIA's capacity will not be able to meet the air traffic forecast far beyond the year 2015.

Our primary strategy is to provide the facilities to meet both near and both long-term demands. The critical elements of this strategy is to preserve the flexibilities to be able to react to

the future urban conditions that may be unforeseen today, such as a free Cuba, the growth of e-commerce, or the success of the Free Trade Agreement that the Americans have been simulating foreign commerce.

Miami-Dade's most limiting capacity constraint today is the number of full-service commercial carrier runways available on our airport system to safely manage an aircraft before it reaches to forecast levels.

MIA is quickly reaching saturation and it's at the point where no additional runway capacity can be provided. Already we are experiencing dislocation upon airport businesses due to space limitations caused by development of our new fourth runway.

Numerous efforts in the last three decades to identify new sites in South Florida for commercial aviation facilities have proven fruitless. There are no other sites. There isn't even another site.

Consequently, the most crucial issue confronting us today is the decision on the ultimate reuse of Homestead. That decision will affect whether or not this community will be able to

accommodate the tremendous worldwide growth in aviation of this forecast. This is growth that we will be unable to meet with MIA and our other airports alone. For example, it was reported in the SEIS, Opa-Locka has fought with airspace environmental justice issues.

From an aviation point of view, the conclusion is inescapable. We need Homestead to meet all of our needs, for passengers, for maintenance, for military, law enforcement, cargo, and general aviation. However, the need for identifying long-term capacity demands will not come at the expense of environmental compatibility. Miami-Dade County is committed to ensuring that the plan and phase development of the commercial airport alternative is implemented in a environmentally compatible manner. Miami-Dade Aviation Department has a substantial track record of environmental responsibilities. We have spent over 170 million dollars since 1994 to address environmental issues. One of the main stays of our current 5 billion dollar construction program is maintaining the environmental quality of not only the airport but of the surrounding communities as well.

The airport is in full agreement with

the activity levels proposed in the SEIS. The projected flight operations provide for future demands. We believe that the aircraft fleet mix described is the most compatible with a joint civilian/military use of the airfield.

Advances in airplane and engine technology will offset future noise created by commercial operations, for example, things like the mandatory conversion of the staging in engines, which went into effect January 1st of this year and the use of quieter regional jets.

We're in the crossroads of future of aviation in South Florida. This is our only opportunity to preserve a badly needed airport to the regional aviation system and to continue to allow this community's aviation industry to grow and prosper.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you.

BILL JOHNSON: Good evening. my name is Bill Johnson, the senior assistant to the county manager, Merrett Stierheim. I appreciate the opportunity to be with you this evening.

I have 30 seconds, and in that 30 seconds I want to say that the role of aviation

here, not just Miami-Dade, but in all of South Florida is of incredible importance. I think everyone in this room probably realizes that our number one industry here in Miami-Dade County is tourism. Over 10 million visitors visit our community every single year, spending over 16 billion dollars.

I'd like you to know that 95 percent of all of those visitors to Miami-Dade County come by air. One-fifth of the entire work force here in Miami-Dade County is employed directly or indirectly through our aviation system.

The airport, therefore, obviously, is of incredible importance to the economic wellbeing of our community. It is, therefore, vital that we have the opportunity to be able to continue to grow. This additional air capacity at Homestead is essential for the health of our community.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: This concludes the presentation of information about the proposals. In a few minutes we'll begin the public comment portion of the hearing.

You have several ways to provide your comments. If you've brought written comments,

please place them in the box on the comment table out in the lobby. Written comments, I do remind you, carry the same weight as well as comments presented at the hearing.

If you want to write down your comments while you're here, there are forms at the comment table. You can also take a form home to complete and mail it back to the address provided on the comment form. You can also write up your comments in your own format and mail them in. You do not need to use the comment forms. They are only for your convenience.

You will have the opportunity to provide oral comments when I begin the public comment portion of the hearing in just a couple of minutes.

Let me tell you a few things about the public comment period. Elected public officials will speak first, then we'll hear from those who submitted cards today indicating their desire to speak. I normally call on people in the order that the cards were submitted. However, as I announced at the earlier hearing today, depending on the size of the crowd tonight, I may have the repeat public speakers wait until all of the new speakers have made their comments. Since I do have 58 new

speakers who signed up, I will call on them first and have the 23 repeat speakers wait until the new speakers are done.

Each individual organization will have three minutes to provide comments. You may finish your sentence when your time is up. Please stop promptly so that we can hear from the maximum number of people. Boos and clapping take away time from the speakers. Please respect other's viewpoints and let them make their comments without interruption.

When I do call on you, please come up to the microphone here, or at the other side of the room, and clearly state your name, the name of the organization, if any, you are representing before you begin your comments.

The transcript of this proceeding will be the permanent record and will be published in the final SEIS. Please do not provide any personal information in your comments if you would not want to see it published in the final SEIS.

It's very important that you use the microphone so that the reporter can hear you and that everyone else in the room can hear you. It's also important that those of you who are talking back there, and you know who you are, will please

quiet down so that we can have an ordinarily hearing. If you've got to talk, you can step outside and do it. The focus here tonight is to listen to your comments regarding the contents of the draft SEIS.

Preceding this presentation, you had an opportunity to ask questions one on one of the technical staff and hopefully they were able to answer your questions. Any further questions asked in the course of making your statements will be addressed in the final SEIS rather than answered tonight. So, again, please focus your comments on the draft SEIS and the analysis of the reuse options.

If you need to have your comments translated into English and did not so indicate when you signed up, please let us know when you get to the microphone. If you made comments today and later decide you have additional comments or know someone who is interested in the comment process but cannot attend any of the meetings, written comments can be submitted until March 7th, 2000. The mailing address can be found in all of the available hand-outs.

I think you folks will be happy to know

that we only have two representatives of elected public officials tonight and then we'll swing right into the public. We have Carol Klingbiel speaking on behalf of Commissioner Sorenson.

000285 CAROL KLINGBIEL: Good evening. My name is Carol Klingbiel. I'm representing Commissioner Sorenson. She sends her regrets that she can't be here with you this evening, but she asked me to read the following comment into the record:

We have an opportunity to close an inappropriate chapter of South Miami-Dade County's history and to help us to begin to create a bright new future of economic development, prosperity and the best protection of our national parks. We can ask the president to approve the Collier Family proposed plan of mineral rights for land at former Homestead Air Force Base.

In 1995 Miami-Dade County landed a no-bid long-term lease to HABDI, a group of developers to build an airport. I as one of the commissioners of South Miami-Dade opposed this vigorously, but was outvoted, however.

However, it is a new day. The Collier and Hoover Family, and Collier and Hoover County and Lacy Hoover Chase, granddaughter of Herbert Hoover,

who helped to establish Biscayne National Park have collaborated to develop a first-class golf course, business park with a hotel resort and aquarium marine institute and luxury RV community.

The plan will create more than 6,800 jobs initially, and more than 2,000 eventually. More than replacing the job loss after Hurricane Andrew, destroying the air base.

The Collier/Hoover plan offers many advantages. First, it's compatible with South Miami-Dade's goals of 1994, redevelopment of the base, sustaining agriculture and expanding tourism in contrast to an airport, which threatens agriculture by paving a way for industrialization and urban sprawl. That would effect the available farm land and threaten tourism by creating a noisy polluting neighbor to Biscayne National Park and its water visitors and fisher people, and imagine what it would do to the quality of our neighborhoods and residential properties.

And, second, the Collier/Hoover plan takes the politics out of the Miami-Dade County. The Colliers have proposed swapping the land for mineral rights, which they own in the mid Cypress National Preserve.

If the Colliers do the transaction at the federal level, the County will have no claim to the land or obligations to HABDI, its chosen developer. Further, it makes the land taxable for Miami-Dade County.

COLONEL McSHANE: Ma'am. Time. You may leave the written comments for insertion of the record. Thank you.

Natacha Seijas Millan.

000286 NATACHA SEIJAS MILLAN: Thank you again for listening to me. There are some things I said the other day that don't need to be repeated again, economic development and employability, but I also would like to tell you that while many things have been said about the constant cargo and the planes every three minutes, that is not a fact. And I think people need not to give this information, because that just confuses the issue.

Although, part of the study will get things clear, I wanted to repeat it again. It is not a huge cargo operation. It is a reliever airport, and those that don't understand can look in the dictionary or call anybody that knows about flying. It's not an area where there was nothing before. It's an area that had the base. Thank God

for that base. Unfortunately, Andrew destroyed it.

But I am from Cuba, and I can tell you that the fact that that base had and still has F-16's, F-15's, F-14's and all the F's. I'm not a pilot, I know nothing about aviation, but they were there to take care of things that were important to us. Andrew destroyed that.

After Andrew we had problems, problems from two residences that that base would be conveyed. And as we come in the long drawn out issue, and then I challenge you, the one in Key West was done quickly and without any complaints.

Was it perhaps the people did not look like me? Was it perhaps for other reasons?

I say this as a chair of the South Florida Planning Council, and I was very supportive on the issue of Key West. Because I think they deserved it. I thought it was a very good plan and I voted and encouraged to vote on the town, because it was the right thing to do.

Now the right thing to do is to listen to the people of Homestead. This is a matter of Homestead. Listen to the ones that are most affected. Easy for anybody to make judgment when they don't live in the area, as it is for any

commissioner to come out for any private endeavor when it's not their district. It's not my district. I'm District 13 with the City of Hialeah and Miami Lakes. And I can tell you I probably stand here to support the people in the South that need jobs.

As I said before, Federal Express left, but it would have brought 700 jobs to that area. That only would have been the tip of an iceberg. I think they deserve it. I think we need to listen to it.

I want to thank you for your patience. Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Jay Suarez?

000287 JAY SAUREZ: Good evening. My name is Jay Saurez. I'm a concerned resident that wishes to express the opinions of a large portion of the Southwest Miami-Dade.

I have seen and lived through devastation that Andrew brought to the people of Miami-Dade County, Naranja, Homestead, Florida City. Since the closing of the full Homestead Air Force Base, South Miami-Dade lost most of their economy.

I firmly believe that the opening of a commercial airport at this side is not only needed for the economy, but also greatly needed relief to

Miami International Airport. It is an inevitable fact that we must have a relief airport somewhere in Miami-Dade County.

A lot of emphasis has been put on the noise pollution issue. I would like to point out that commercial planes have more noise suppression than war planes. If we take this opportunity to work towards a common goal, environmentalists and growth we win, otherwise the future will bring uncontrolled growth and chaos, then we and our planet will lose. Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Catharina Bernabei.

000288 CATHARINA BERNABEI: Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. I am Cathy Bernabei. I am a mother of three children and a teacher for 27 years. I teach children with mental retardation. I'm a scout leader for 30 years. I am going to speak from the heart. My heart is beating very fast right now.

I would like to take you on a journey. I would like you to travel with me with your mind's eye 100 years ago, 1900's, let's say in the cosmos, looking down on planet earth, our beautiful planet. Just vision it. Then zoom in closer to Florida, South Florida. Florida with the Everglades flowing

from Lake Okeechobee all the way to the base, beautiful river of grass, with flocks and flocks of birds, Ibises, Egrets, Spoonbills, thousands and thousands, and panthers abundant, and the black bear, and people, the Seminole tribes living in peace together. Then came the settlers.

Let's travel again to the year 2000. We celebrated 2000. Look, ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Penelas and everybody, here we are with our parks, little dots left. The flocks aren't flocks anymore. And understand, that I have seen flocks of birds for at least ten years in Africa as a child and I've seen flocks of Flamingos and crown birds rise up above the Anatomica, and its marvelous sight that we don't have anymore. It angers me we cannot give it to our children, but let it be, we have our parks, thank goodness, but they are so endangered. They are sick. Our panthers are doomed. Lots of plant and animal life is extinct, which wasn't 100 years ago.

Our nature is very strong, it can bounce back, but we cannot put more stress on our Everglades. It is not even feasible. If we had the Everglades as they were 100 years ago, we could risk it and say, okay, air pollution, noise, if it's

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damaged, we have enough Everglades left. It may restore itself. No, we have to act now.

Let's travel some more my fellow Floridians. Let's go to the Year 3000. The Everglades are gone, and our children are angry with us. They can only vision the Everglades in movies.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Germaine Tilney.

000289 GERMAINE TILNEY: My name is Germaine Tilney. I'm with the Sierra Club. I'd like to show a video.

(Thereupon, a video was shown.)

COLONEL McSHANE: Any other comments?

GERMAINE TILNEY: I have a minute left?

COLONEL McSHANE: I can give you a little bit of time.

GERMAINE TILNEY: I came here in 1950, and one of the reasons I'm still here is because of the Everglades National Park. I just love it. And I remember what it was like in 1950, and I want my grandchildren and their grandchildren to enjoy it the way I did.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Michael Slotnick.

000290 MICHAEL SLOTNICK: My name is Michael

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Slotnick. I live at 10340 Southwest 96th Terrace. I've been a resident of Southwest Dade County since July of 1953.

When I came to Dade County, I remember Homestead as a thriving community supported in large respect by the air base. That continued until the twin disasters in the early 1990's, Hurricane Andrew, and the closing of the base.

Prior to that time I could not remember reading or hearing any negative comments about the air base, that it was a harm to the community or a detriment to the environment. My son-in-law, Craig Roth, is presently an endodontist in the Downtown Homestead area. He, my daughter, Debbie, and her two children live in the Redlands area. Within the last couple of years Debbie and Craig have been getting very displeased with the area. The fact that there's a lack of commerce and they looked at it as having a very weak future. To my wife and my regret, they are seriously considering relocating.

Also back in 1953 I remember Miami International Airport as being several isolated hangers along Northwest 36th Street. I've watched that grow into the giant that it is today, catering to the cargo international all over the world

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passengers, but it also has expensive gates which drive up the airfares.

I looked in the Sunday Harold in the travel section, there's a big difference between the airfares between Fort Lauderdale Airport and Miami Airport. It also has no room to grow.

Miami, our county needs a second airport that will handle cargo, that will serve as a regional airport with less expensive gates and hopefully lower fares. What better place is there for an airport than on a track of land that for decades has served as an air base and at the same time will return some of the prosperity to Homestead that I remember back in 1953.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Richard Grosso.

000291 RICHARD GROSSO: Good evening. Thank you. My name is Richard Grosso. I am here representing the Sierra Club, Tropical Audubon Society and Everglades Coalition this evening.

The assumption of the Environmental Impact Statement as it discusses this commercial project to Dade County is that we must accept and live with a certain amount of degradation in the

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name of economic development. Why would this community, when it has the option of having good economic development that does not degrade the national parks and the economic generator that they are, why would you choose the most environmentally destructive alternative? That does not make sense at all economically or environmentally.

Dade County, I was the lawyer for the Sierra Club in the land use process that got us here. We sat across from Dade County and when Dade County is saying, it's going to consider a buffer, it's going to consider the concepts of a buffer, it's going to consider the noise concepts of National Parks. We sat across the table from them, when push came to shove, and specifics were being discussed, they weren't willing to do the things that they said they were. They weren't willing to ensure that the noise levels are consistent with the national parks. It's easy to say. It's hard to do. It can't be done with this project.

The project of Dade County is open-ended, it's a nice deal for the developer, it puts a lot of financial burden on the taxpayers of Miami-Dade County. You've heard tonight both Dade County commit to a full blown airport, then we've

heard they're committed to a limited airport. Which is it? What exactly is the plan? That's a huge problem. We cannot get by on project this important with slogans and just saying it's going to be economic development.

Most people that I've heard in terms of the airline industry says this location does not make sense. If the Dade County taxpayers put almost a billion dollars into trying to make this a running airport and it doesn't work, who's out that money? The taxpayers are out that money. So that does not make sense.

Now, the Everglades Coalition has asked me to come and speak tonight. Their position is that they're fully against the commercial airport here. This Environmental Impact Statement when it turns into a final Environmental Impact Statement must include an unbiased, comprehensive analysis of all the impacts. And you're looking at economic impacts. What are the economic negatives here? What existing industries in the Upper Keys and South Dade County are going to be hurt by this project?

The final EIS must address fully and resolve the objections of the Department of Interior, the noise issue is a huge issue. It's

easy to say you're going to fix it. It's really hard to fix it. That must be flushed out in the entirety. The final EIS must analyze all mitigation necessary, look at the costs of all mitigation necessary, the buffer, all of those issues, and translate that into the final Environmental Impact Statement.

This is a national park. There are two national parks. You would not do something like this at Yosemite. You would try to do a true project that brings in jobs and projects the environment here. You don't have to make a choice. You can't have both. We must insist on the community having both.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Tom Kirby.

000292 TOM KIRBY: Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Tom Kirby. I live in Kendall, however, I'm a third generation Homesteadian and only moved after my house was smashed by Hurricane Andrew. I'm also the executive director of the Dade County Farm Bureau. There's 6,000 plus in our organization representing working people, many whom have been building this community for over 100 years.

Lately I've been contemplating a work consensus, and how it's recently been interpreted by those blocking development of the commercial airport at the Homestead Air Force Base.

For six years the environmental community has been disseminating information about the project. Not everyone has the time to read through Environmental Impact Statements. Once environmentalists paralyze the average person with fear and confusion, they say the project cannot move forward without consensus.

We have consensus in South Dade. Here's a list of parks, local groups and individuals currently that support the development of the commercial airport. The Homestead/Florida City Chamber of Commerce, Miami-Dade Mayor Alex Penelas, Division Council, Chamber South, Homestead Mayor Steve Schriver, Florida City Mayor Otis Wallis, Hialeah Mayor Raul Martinez, Senitor Gerald Jones and Senitor Bob Graham, and other than those that I mentioned, you can't forget that Governor Lawton Chiles, a former United States senator, someone who became a legend in this State and a leader of the environmental community, plus a 7 to 0 vote in order to move this project forward. Included in that,

however, was Bill Nelson a former astronaut. Who better than anyone understands the effects of air traffic on the environment?

If all of these groups and leaders endorse this project, why do the environmentalists oppose it? They're either not in the community, they're either not involved in the community, or they're a very minority voice.

On Tuesday night you heard from several mayors of Miami-Dade County, and they expressed the importance of this airport. There's one lone voice opposing it, and that's Miami-Dade Commissioner Katy Sorenson. Unfortunately for those of us who have worked so hard to see this through, Katy the environmentalist, the position she seems to be holding is opposed to this project because she is a commissioner for South Dade County. She let the rest of the county believe that she truly represents South Dade's wishes.

Two years ago she told the Greater Miami Convention Visitor's Bureau that South Dade didn't want an airport, and instead wanted opportunity for echo-tourism, and Katy told the truth from the beginning, you could not be wasting your time trying to engage in consensus, there is consensus. There's

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always been consensus.

COLONEL McSHANE: Time, sir. Thank you.

Christopher Roy.

000293 CHRISTOPHER ROY: Good evening. I'm speaking as a concerned resident of South Florida, and I would just like to say that if a commercial airport is allowed to open at the Homestead Air Base, it would be the closest airport to a national park in the United States.

That means 230,00 flights over these parks is unnecessary and uncalled for. The proposed airport will not comply with the national parks' system standard for airplane noise. There will no longer be a significant quiet natural resource left in the two parks.

Yes, it's true that the Air Force jets are louder than commercial jets, but Air Force jets do not take off every five minutes. Air Force jets take off and stay aloft.

In order to protect the two national parks from pollution, the planes would be required to use north and south corridors, would replace the Florida Keys, directing the flight pattern of the aircraft. The use and enjoyment of the waters in and around Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

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depends on large measure on the tranquility and peace of those waters, and the air space over those waters.

The redevelopment of the air base as a commercial airport would change land use patterns in South Miami-Dade County, which would ultimately create adverse pressures on land use and comprehensive plans in the Upper Keys. Some of these pressures include increased development in Monroe County, increase in land owner expectations, and the exacerbation of the hurricane evacuation bottleneck.

Hialeah Mayor Raul Martinez was quoted in yesterday's edition of the Miami Harold as saying, quote, "There can't be a compromise. You can find a solution that balances the economy and the environment."

Mayor Martinez's statement is correct, the proposed airport does not and cannot accomplish this. The only way for this balance to be accomplished is for a mixed-use proposal, not a commercial airport.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Let me remind some of you folks about the ground rules here. You get

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about three minutes to speak. I told speakers that they could finish their thoughts. So you folks are hollering, "time" as soon as the cards go up, don't do that. I will stop them when they finish their thought. I'll take care of running the hearing. That's my job.

Esther Bonnie Rosa Cintron.

000294 ESTHER BONNIE CINTRON: I too am a school teacher and I live in the Miami Lakes area. I work in Carol City/Opa-Locka.

I contribute regularly to the Sierra Club and as well as many other environmental organizations. I too was a Girl Scout for ten years, and I've done a lot of camping, including the Everglades.

In my classroom as well as my personal life, I've always pushed for conservation and preservation issues, but none of those things that we heard today, like the extinction of all the animals and plants that have happened in the past were due to an airport on a Homestead site. There was an airport existing there when it was the most busy military base on the Continental United States, it was there for years, and Everglades seemed to survivor fairly well, not as well as in the past,

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but that really was not the fault of the airport. It was the fault of all the people coming into South Florida, and I doubt that we're going to stop that.

I remember very well that the Air Force Base did not seem to have any disastrous effect over the environment. I'm just wondering why after 27 studies were done and they all concluded that there would be no negative impact as long as certain guidelines were followed, I can't understand why the question keeps coming up again and again.

And then if you think for a moment, if we believe what the environmentalists are saying, then we must conclude that they're saying it's going to be very harmful to have an airport so we won't put it there. We'll put it somewhere else. Well, we happen to live, the people where I live, happen to live in the somewhere else that has been considered, and all I can tell you is, if it's harmful there, what will it be doing to all of us? There are thousands and thousands of people who live in the Opa-Locka, Carol City, Miami Lakes area. The entire area is surrounded by homes very close to the airport. Florida Memorial College is a stone's throw from the runway. They have the Marion Center for Retarded People there. Any kind of mishap would

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be a double disaster, not only for the people on the plane, but it would have impact on the ground as well.

I just can't understand why we can't go ahead and try to do something carefully at this Homestead site, which is a much more logical and sensible site. There's a lot more room there. And there already is a good facility going. Just the air traffic question alone at Opa-Locka would be terrible for the air traffic controllers. We are about 12 miles from Miami International Airport.

Thank you.

BY COLONEL McSHANE: Next speaker is Maurice Ferre.

000295 MAURICE FERRE: Ladies and Gentlemen, and hearing officers, I wrote a letter, and it's on the record, to the Vice President of the United States. I just wanted to paraphrase what I said.

Repeatedly we've had environmental studies that have been done and all of them have concluded basically the same thing. The issue that is before us, I think, has to do with economic future of this community. Unlike other communities, we don't have an industrial base. We also have an overly dependent in our 100 years of history on

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tourism.

In the last 20 years a phenomenon has happened in this community, that is, Miami has become a major international center of trade and commerce, and that is, basically, because of Miami's geographic position. There are 400 million people in Latin America and increasingly they all look to Miami as the entry point to the United States and they bring their business and their banking and their other needs here. They also get services here, medical services, education, University of Miami, FIU are becoming increasingly important. That all depends on the airport.

Miami International Airport is the eighth most important airport in the world. But, unfortunately, because of its limitations of 3,000 acres, it is very close to full capacity. It was a difficult task to get that fourth runway going, but even with that fourth runway, all of the experts that have looked at this, experts that look at the airport says that within the next ten years it will reach capacity. That means that once we have two and a half million tons of cargo and 40 to 45 million passengers, that airport cannot hold anymore.

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So the question is about the future. And we're not talking about just the people that are coming in here as tourists, doing trade and commerce, we're talking about five million American citizens that live in South Florida that work and live and enjoy this community. There is no choice other than that Homestead Base. We can't go to Opa-Locka, it doesn't work. All the experts have said that. We can't go to Fort Lauderdale? That doesn't work.

So I think having looked at this environmentally and concluded that there is no major reason not to have it, it is absolutely essential for the economic health and wellbeing of the future of this community to have that alternate airport in Homestead.

Thank you, sir.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Michael Robinson.

000296 MICHAEL ROBINSON: Thank you. I'm not speaking from a prepared statement, so this is a little bit from the cuff.

One thing I would like to talk about is the noise. Earlier we had a speaker who spoke about how the county is very wishy-washy with the amount

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of noise that they're going to allow. However, I want to speak more about the effect of the noise on the animals.

I'm a biologist at the University of Miami. I study animal behavior, and one thing I'm positive of is that animals are detrimentally affected by noise. Now, these statements are supported by many, many studies in biology. The one study has shown that mammals will go miles and miles out of their way to avoid human being noise. If you guys like seeing dolphins, well, there's a good chance they're not going to be around that much longer.

But the mammals most detrimentally affected by noise are birds. Florida has one of the most diverse bird population in North America, both resident birds and birds that migrate through.

Now, studies have shown that birds, they don't like living near airports than the rest of you guys. Someone who spoke and says, she doesn't want an airport living by her living in Opa-Locka. Let me tell you something, the birds don't like it either. One, they'll either avoid the area completely. Another one, even sadder story, birds will be bothered by the noise and they might make a

nest, they might even lay an egg, but then they'll abandon that egg.

So we have two effects. We're going to lose the bird population and we're also going to lose the baby bird population, which is the adult birds of the future. So if we're going to keep people coming down here, keep birds coming down from Canada, from the rest of America, if we want to keep our bird population and the rest of our animal population at reasonable levels, we must not build this airport.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Dorothy Cook?

000297 DOROTHY COOK: Good evening. Thank you for having us. I have the advantage of studying the reports on Homestead as a member of the Planning and Advisory Board, and at the time there was very little objection from the environmentalists or anyone else. The 100,000 that were moved out of Homestead because of Andrew, the people that remained were promised jobs and an airport. Two presidents promised this.

After 27 environmental studies, all confirming that this was the right way to go, I

think it's time that we actually stopped all the studies and started building the airport. Opa-Locka is in the northwest section of Miami. Miami Lakes is a bird sanctuary, and we can't afford to develop Opa-Locka any more than it is, it's too congested. It's a residential section with schools, all kinds of things going on.

Homestead has the advantage of an airport already there. When the gentleman said something about animals and birds, there's a word for it, a big word, it's adaptation, and they do adapt. It's true.

The SEIS, which is the most comprehensive, expensive and well done scientific environmental study in the history of our nation, air quality is protected, water resources are protected, area protected from unacceptable noise impact. The airport is safe. The airport will not disturb the wetlands, the airport will not adversely affect wildlife and habitat. The manatees and crocodiles in Biscayne National Park will not be harmed. There is no aviation safety threat to Turkey Point Nuclear Plant.

Thank you for your time.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you.

Luisa Rivero?

000298 LUISA RIVERO: Good evening. My name is Luisa Rivero. I'm a citizen of South Florida, and in my family's name I would like to give my support of the redevelopment of Homestead and the reliever airport, which according to scientific studies is environmentally compatible which will not damage the environment and will generate thousands of good paying jobs and millions of earnings for the Homestead residents.

Please, do not delay any longer this project.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Alexander Stone.

000299 ALEXANDER STONE: Thank you. I'm against redevelopment of the Air Force Base as a commercial airport and in favor of the mixed-use alternative. I think the final SEIS has to take in full consideration the national interest in the national parks, which is not covered in the last Environmental Impact Statement. The question at hand and the issues at hand are not just local. These are national parks that are being threatened and potentially impacted, so nationally in these parks has to address that and that hasn't been done.

I think it's important to prove growth and project development in South Dade. A mixed-use alternative will provide in excess of 11,500 jobs. To do that, moreover, will give a fast economic payoff to the area that the airport alternative would, the jobs will be there sooner, people will have money in their pockets sooner with a lot lower environmental risk.

Another thing the EIS doesn't consider when it looks at the question of the need for a reliever airport, in fact, this is supposed to be a regional airport, and region doesn't just mean Dade County. There is a Fort Lauderdale International Airport. I live in Downtown Miami. I use the Fort Lauderdale International Airport. It takes me the same amount of time to drive to the Fort Lauderdale International Airport as it would to take me to drive to the Homestead Air Force Base.

The final version of the supplemental EIS has got to bring back into the equation, not just look at Dade County like we're an island in space, with nothing beyond its borders to connect it to a regional concept of airport service and delivery.

And, yes, the lady that said that there

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would not be one flight per three minutes. I projected it, the Air Force is right. According to the EIS, with a single runway, the projected build out is 231,000 flights per year. Do the math. That is not one flight every three minutes. That's one flight every two and a half minutes. Okay. That's 24 flights an hour. 24 hours a day, every day.

How can you tie that in, or make that fit national in these national parks? Do you really think that you could have a national park experience in a place where jets roar overhead every two and a half minutes?

The question is not the same as the question of a military base. Military bases invoke national defense, as is reasonably exempt from normal consideration and environmental standards. That's why there's an Air Force Base there and the environmentalists never complained about it. It wouldn't do any good, because we wouldn't claim exception under national defense, but you can't do that with a commercial airport. That's why this thing doesn't belong between those two national parks.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Michael Amico.

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000300 MICHAEL AMICO: Good evening, everybody. My name is Michael Amico. I come here as a citizen, environmentally concerned citizen.

With regard to the redevelopment plans, many people hang their heads on jobs, but there's more than one peg to this job market, one of those pegs is the airport. The figures of 38,000 jobs will not mean until 2025, 2030 when the full build out is estimated.

What we must consider, we must consider another stronger, more sensible environmentally friendly plan. This is the mixed-use alternative. Mixed-use alternative option has to base that approximately 5,500 to 6,000 jobs will manifest itself by 2,005, while the airport will produce or 3700 jobs in the same amount of time.

Additionally, the same thing holds true for the estimates that impact the mixed-use alternative. It estimates 1,600 million annual increase by 2005, while the airport only estimates 1,500 million dollar increase.

I implore that our happy home under the correct peg, the mixed us alternative peg, the quicker in realization and the environmentally concerned.

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Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Dennis Sytsma.

000301 DENNIS SYTSMA: Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

My name is Dennis Sytsma. I lived in the northwest area in the Redlands area near Homestead for over 30 years, so I don't want to hear any finger pointing here saying all people live in Homestead want a commercial airport, it's not true. The community is pulverized, so pulverized that many are scared to speak against what their minister may be in favor of, what their community leader and business leaders are in favor of. Many of them are like me say, gee, do we have to have this shoved down my throat, and my family. I don't think that that's fair.

And Homestead has faced adversity before with environmental issues, like the mayor said, it's de'ja vu all over again.

Members of the media, please do the research. Check the Miami Herald. Check the South Dade Turkey Point Nuclear Plant.

We heard all these promises before, jobs, jobs, jobs, and electricity too cheap to meter. Well, I'm still waiting for the electricity

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to be too cheap to meter. Too many promises. The commercial airport will not thrive without a major aviation sponsor.

And I also heard the president promised us, Bill Clinton promised us, again, media do the research. Check Texas AM University's Presidential library, pull out what was written about Homestead Junior High, where I went to school and where the president spoke. We weren't promised a commercial airport, we were promised that the base would be rebuilt as a military base. Now that promise was not kept because of the action by the BRAK commission, which only congress can change, only congress can overwrite what BRAK decided. So a broken promise is a broken promise. They did not promise a commercial airport.

I favor the mixed-use proposal because in the early '70's, when I went to South Dade High School, I did what any job seeker should do, I checked the research. I found out what are the jobs of the future going to be, because that's what we're worried about here, the future. We want the best future for our children, the best future for our community. I want the best for every job seeker who seeks, but you need to attain the skills needed, and

that is through education.

Please don't wait for empty promises of a commercial airport. Job seekers, whatever age you are, go to your school, find a mentor, find a teacher and learn, and attain those skills. So if you could read it, you could do it. I did it. I went and did the research. I went to Miami-Dade Community College. I went to Florida International University. I got the skills necessary, and I can put my resume on the Internet now and get employed almost anywhere. I could work out of my closet and make a good living.

So, please, job seekers, don't wait for empty promises. Don't listen to all the smart people who are smarter than me, obviously. Please, help yourself invest in your own future. Get an education. Get a job.

Thank you for hearing my comments tonight.

COLONEL McSHANE: Diana Alvear.

000302 DIANA ALVEAR: Good evening. I'm Diana Alvear, a long time Miami resident. In fact, I would like to say, first of all, we don't speak through the commissioner's mouth, not all the conditos feel the way you do. There's

environmentalists that do research and realize an airport in Homestead is not the best option we have.

I understand how you feel. I live in Miami Lakes. I know that having an airport there wouldn't exactly be paradise, at the same time though I'd have to side with people saying in between two national parks, that is not our best option, and it's not fair to just shunt it off to someplace where we know we can get away with it, and the short term profits in the end will be very few.

I'd also like to mention that, talking about tourism and the need to sustain this and have a place where people can go to another airport so Miami won't be so congested. Well, tourists visit national parks too. In fact, a lot of tourists do, and I've had lots of friends from college, from other states and places come to Miami, come to South Florida to visit the Everglades. Because, you know what? There's nothing like it anywhere else?

And if you go to the Everglades and you see airplanes going on every couple of minutes, well, then, it's not an enjoyable experience. And you know what? There won't be the birds to look out for, the other mammals to look out for. It won't be the experience and tranquility that it can be.

I have been to the Everglades so many times. I go whenever I get a chance because Miami is very loved and I like the climate that it offers me. It won't be an option if HABDI has their way. They have all these measures that the sound is not going to be intolerable and that we're going to look out for the animals. I don't think that's going to happen, I really don't think so.

I would encourage you in the hearings right now to please consider this, I don't have children. I don't have a family just yet. I'm thinking about everyone's children nationally, okay. Let's please preserve these national parks. They're all we have left.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Robert Dolinsky.

000303 ROBERT DOLINSKY: Hello, my name is Robert Dolinsky. Obviously with issues like this there's two main issues -- one main issue with two opposing sides, and basically what the people up here have to do is weigh the issues right here. You have the environmentalists on one side and people favoring the commercial airport.

I think the only thing you can really do is look at the facts. They've done studies to

ensure the environment you've been taking care of won't have any detrimental effect. It's been a costly and lengthy study. It would be a complete waste of taxpayers' money to completely go for what came out of it.

On the opposite side, they know for a fact that it will create jobs that will generate revenue for a very, very poor community compared to the rest of the State of Florida that hasn't prospered with the economic boom that the rest of the nation has.

In addition to that, it will also help us subside the increased amount of air traffic that's coming into the Miami Airport. so I just urge the Commission to take into consideration all the facts and make an informed decision, which would be to go with a commercial airport.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Karen Franklin.

000304 KAREN FRANKLIN: I'm Karen Franklin, I'm here to talk about Lake Okeechobee, which is also a place like the Everglades. Lake Okeechobee is the largest lake in the Southern United States. Okeechobee is a Seminole Indian word that means

plenty big waters.

The lake lies in South Central Florida and borders the northern part of the Everglades. It covers about 700 square miles, and has an average depth of nine feet. The system of canals arise out of outlets to the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. The canals are vital in supplying water in the urban area, along Southern Florida's Atlantic Coast.

COLONEL McSHANE: Georgia Millard.

000305 GEORGIA MILLARD: My name is Georgia Millard. Margaret Stoneman Douglas is considered the mother of the Everglades. She's written many books that take time to describe the beautiful Everglades and echo-system around us, and why we have to save this.

These reasons have to do with the animals and all the habitats inside, even us. People that appreciate the Everglades know all about this. They love to visit and is a place to keep. If you think we should still build the airport, well, that's your decision, but please listen to us and consider that we are trying to make a difference in our world.

COLONEL McSHANE: Juliet Barrientos.

000306 JULIET BARRIENTOS: Hello. My name is Juliet Barrientos. I'm here to tell you a little bit about the Everglades National Park.

Everglades National Park is one of our few tropical regions in the United States, actually, the only one. Located on the southwestern tip of the Florida peninsula, this park includes 10,000 islands along the Gulf of Mexico and the part of the Everglades and Big Cypress Swamp.

Its jungle plant life includes sawgrass, orchids, cypress trees, pines, palms, and mangrove trees. There's also manatees, turtles that live in the Everglades. The Everglades was established in 1947, and it is very important to us. So please help us save it.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Alan Bernover.

000307 ALAN BERNOVER: Good evening, members of the Panel. Earlier a gentleman spoke about being an educated citizen and I live in Dade County and I am an educated citizen, and I'd like to tell you some of the facts that have yet, since I've been listening, to be mentioned.

After the hurricane in '92, the

president and the Secretary Perry all promised that the Homestead area would be re-developed and the tremendous need for jobs would be satisfied. Eight years has passed and there's been no action.

Now many of the environmentalists and others have mentioned various facts that would show a reliever airport in Homestead would be an incorrect and erroneous thought.

However, if you look at some of the facts, South Florida does not need a reliever airport. This has been shown to be erroneous. Opa-Locka is the feasible alternative and non airport proposals would create the equivalent number of long-term good paying jobs, but more delays are necessary further study and further studies in fact are necessary.

These thoughts are incorrect, and recent reports and studies that have been conducted indicate several things; that the airport will, in fact, meet Federal Clear Air requirements; that the proposed action includes a comprehensive surface water management master plan for managing on-site storm water; that the plan will comply with permit provisions heading for South Florida Water Management District.

The country's leading independent experts have concluded that a commercial airport in Homestead will have an environmentally compatible noise impact, and as the study is concluded, the developmental effects on the wetlands are minor and that these resources will be protected under Federal and State regulations.

The FAA has confirmed that an airport will produce as many as 38,000 related jobs, estimated to produce over 800 million dollars in earnings with a potential in upwards of one billion dollars.

Now, the time has come to fulfill on these promises and the people in need and the area that is still plagued by these problems after Andrew. It's time for action.

Thank you.

BY COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Kaley Kriminger.

000308 KALEY KRIMINGER: Hi, my name is Kaley Kriminger, and I'm here to represent R4H Club. What I envision at Homestead Air Force Base is a ecological theme park resembling a rain forest. This could work as a model for other parks to provide an example for replanting native plants and

animals.

We are losing our natural areas at such a rapid pace. In only 100 years we have scarred the land and taken away the habitats of our native animals. Imagine what life is like at this spot where the Sequesta Indians, an abundance of fish, sea life, and animals such as bears, otters, and panthers roam this land, along with a wide array of fleeing birds.

I've heard about the commercial airport being built by South Florida's two national parks, Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park. Of course I strongly disagree with this action. These are some of the reasons why we should not give the commercial airport by two national parks.

First of all, it will hold noise pollution, which will scare the animals in the close by national parks.

Second, it will cause air pollution. Once all of the life forms in Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park are gone, they will never come back, extinction is forever. Biscayne National Park is the only protected reef in the United States of America, and Everglades National Park is the only Everglades in the whole wide world.

Let's take good care of these precious places before they're gone forever. Let's use vision, not greed. This is paradise lost, but this could be paradise reborn.

Thank you for your consideration.

COLONEL McSHANE: Francisco Angones.

000309 FRANCISCO ANGONES: Thank you very much. Good evening to you and to the members of the Air Force. My name is Francisco Angones, I'm an attorney, but I am not here in my representative capacity.

I live at 1203 Centona Street, Coral Gables, Florida, and I have been a resident of Miami-Dade County for approximately 40 years. For part of those 40 years I lived in Homestead where I went to elementary school and high school. I attended school with many of the children of the Air Force personnel, including Michael Chaves, whose father at the time was the highest ranking Hispanic in the Air Force. Mayors Conley and Dickenson of Homestead were also my classmates.

I have many fond memories of Homestead where I spent my first few years in this country. I often wish the Air Force was still there. I think it was a mistake, but we have to go forward.

I am here to request something that seems evident to everyone. If an airport is going to harm Miami-Dade County, if it's going to do damage to our environment, we shouldn't build an airport, but since 1991, 1992 we have been studying this matter to death. Most recently, and I have to read it, because I never come up with a name, the government issue, the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, which conclusively states that commercial air activity at the former base will not have, "any significant impact on our national parks and/or its surrounding areas."

I think it is time to move on. We need to develop this former base, provide a sorely needed airport for our community. Also, this will allow to keep our county some control and an interest in this area, whereas, with the other plans it will be lost for our community.

Thirdly, we need the revenues, the revenues that this airport will create. I think this matter has been belabored, but I didn't want to stand by the wayside and not have a say when some decision is made.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration, sir.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Jessica Viquez. She can speak after the next speaker. Luis Perez

000310 LUIS PEREZ: Good evening, distinguished panelists, my name is Luis Perez. I'm a resident of Miami-Dade County. I've lived in Miami-Dade County for 38 years. I went through high school here. I went three community college here, and I'm presently living in Kendall.

I've seen Miami go from a quiet sleeply town to a major urban area, an area with typical growth problems. I think it's important to realize that the land on which the base is situated was owned by Miami-Dade County and it was transferred to the military during the war era for our national defense. The federal government now, because of Hurricane Andrew, has an important decision to make, it depends on the need for jobs versus the impact on the environment.

Based on the fact that Miami-Dade County owned the property before the federal government did, Miami-Dade County as a whole and its citizens as a whole must benefit from the decision. How can the benefits of all of the citizens of Miami-Dade County be met while the rest of our nation is in its

most prosperous economic times? Miami-Dade County and specifically South Dade suffers from tremendous unemployment. So this area needs jobs. The reliever airport alternative creates the most jobs.

The Collier alternative creates the least amount of jobs. Use of the base as an airport is consistent with its present use. Without being insensitive to any members of our audience, you know the old adage, if it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's a duck. Well, this base looks like an airport, so it should be continued to be used as an airport.

Regarding the environment, I've got two young children, and I'm trying to educate them on the environment and have them respect the environment. I recycle because studies show that it's good to recycle. For that reason, I respect the study that has been conducted, and I'm no one to question a two-year, five million dollar study.

Therefore I respectfully urger for the Air Force to consider the transfer to Miami-Dade County as an airport.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Did Jessica Viquez return?

000311 JESSICA VIQUEZ: Good evening, my name is Jessica Viquez, and I'm here because I support the reliever airport.

With regards to the Collier and Hoover development plan, from my experience in the resort industry, there is no comparison with earnings and positions. $14,000 is the minimum annual income in a resort. $34,000 is a minimum annual income at the airport.

The difference between the two is a significant amount. As to the positions, when I first applied at a resort, the available starting positions were in the following departments: Golf cart rentals and housekeeping, both of which makes less than $14,000 a year. Workers who had been at the resort for more than five years in the starting position were only earning slightly more and had filled the higher positions.

People who earn $14,000 a year are at a poverty level. Don't you get tired of seeing homeless people? Don't you wish you could do something like get a job for them, or help them get a job, and live a better life? Now you can. All it takes is support for the reliever airport.

What about the students that graduated

high school and have to go out looking for jobs, and have to pay their schools, because their parents couldn't? Not everybody gets a scholarship and/or financial aid. Most of them never find a good paying job and have to suffer for fast food restaurants, department stores, and never have a chance to move up to a better position.

What about small businesses that have been forced to cut down on their expenses because they don't earn enough to even stay open? Then employees are laid off and forced to look for another job, possibly having to go on Welfare for awhile.

What about Homestead Hospital? Due to the economy, it's losing millions of dollars. If it closes, then where is the next hospital? Kendall? How long is it going to take to get to the hospital when there's an emergency? Where are these employees going to go?

In conclusion, it's all a question of common sense. It's a question of where the future of this community is without the reliever airport, and I support the development of the base of this airport.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Frank Jackalone.

000312 FRANK JACKALONE: I want to show you a map.

I want to start off by saying my name is Frank Jackalone. I am the director of the Florida Office of the Sierra Club. I'm speaking today on behalf of the National Club representing over 600,000 members of the Sierra Club who enjoy hiking and canoeing and kayaking and bicycling and all sorts of recreation through the national parks of this country.

I want to say first that your goals for the SEIS, for transferring the property from the air base talk first about supporting local plans for economic revitalization of South Florida. Let's address that very quickly and find out what the facts are.

The facts, according to the unemployment statistics for the City of Homestead from the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau and Labor Statistics show that, yes, we had an unemployment problem, it peaked at 11.1 percent in 1992, but ever since then, each year it's gone down and down and down to where both the State of Florida and the U.S. Department of

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Labor now say that unemployment in Homestead is at 5.5 percent less than that of Dade County. It's less than Homestead. Can Homestead use a boost? Yes, it still can use a boost. That's what the mixed plan would be getting at.

Secondly, you talk about protecting Biscayne and Everglades National Parks. I will say, number one, in your SEIS, you show a mountain of evidence that there will be great increased pollution, particularly in Biscayne National Park, as a result of placing the airport in that location.

Secondly, we have the problem with sprawl. And Johnathan Almond is showing you the map. You see in the upper portion of the map Miami International Airport, and the sprawl in the city of the urban area that surrounds it, and then you see the line where sprawl stops, in Everglades National Park.

Homestead Air Base down toward the bottom, in an area that is agricultural and somewhat pristine going down to the Keys, what some would have us do is not just recover from the hurricane, but to develop that portion that is undeveloped, to repeat what happens around the Miami International Airport, around the whole area.

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I'm running out of time, but I want to say, for the record, that the noise provisions, in particular, the noise provisions, the data I believe is suspect, and your conclusions are cooked otherwise, and I would be glad to give you more data about that.

And, finally, I want to say that the American people will not stand for Yellow Stone National Park having an airport right next to it. They will not stand for the Grand Canyon having an airport next to it, or countless other major parks. And the Everglades National Park and the Florida Marine Sanctuary and Biscayne National Park, I'll tell you, the 600,000 members of the Sierra Club, the American people will stop that from happening if you don't.

COLONEL McSHANE: Dan Spotts.

000313 DAN SPOTTS: Yes, Dan Spotts. My company is Miami Aqua-Culture. We are an export/import of perishable cargo. We are opposed to a commercial airport in Homestead because it would force us to split our operations and transfer in between. It is a bad idea for our business.

Although, the Dade County Aviation Department has various political reports saying we need more

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airports, I have yet to hear a single airline, no Fed Ex is here tonight, no United, American, a single distributor show up and say that they desperately need more airline space. They don't require it, certainly not in Homestead because they would be in the same position going back and forth between the two.

Repeated efforts to re-energize Opa-Locka was lost. The quoted reason from Dade County Aviation Department has been the trade with Brazil and Venezuela is way down, that they're building a fourth runway to MIA, and Fort Lauderdale is underutilized. We don't need more cargo space. That was in the Miami Herald. Which is the truth between those two?

It is important to remember after Hurricane Andrew a lot of jobs were lost, especially airline trained people, that Major Paisley came up with a project by signing a no-bid project with a previous non-existing group of developers, but the law requires that this transfer have an environment impact statement so that we can have these kind of informed public discussions. People know what's going on. The major helpers knew the law, but the first report was so pathetic and inadequate that it

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could not conform to the law. The reason that we have spent another seven years, and millions of dollars for the SEIS is not because of environmentalists, those bad tree lovers, it's because the airport developers try to spread suburban sprawl. All we want is an opportunity to discuss this.

Now seven years later, unemployment in Homestead has been said is close to 5 and a half percent, and property values are way up.

An inexperienced HABDI will depend on the Air Force public transportation contracts to build this new airport. The Hoover team has built environmentally safe aquarium based projects that revitalized Boston, they revitalized Downtown Baltimore, Chatinuga. Collier resources has had many years of experience redeveloping military bases. They want to make Homestead a destination, not an after thought.

When will people start helping themselves. When Dade County wants to build a dump, they look to South Dade. When they want to build a power plants, they look to South Dade. When they didn't want a racetrack in Downtown Miami, they move to South Dade, but they don't want a noisy airport

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in Opa-Locka or Coral Gables, they move to South Dade.

The conclusion to remember, the Air Force and the FAA were called upon to do the SEIS from the Department of Interior because they wanted an airport. As a biologist I know this report is somewhat slanted because of that. This used to be a super fund site and the Air Force did a great job of cleaning it up. Why pay millions to fix it and then turn it back to the airport?

Thank you very much.

000314 AUDREY PITTERMAN: My name is Audrey Pitterman. I'm proud to say that I'm a member of the Red Pass. I am an environmentalist. I would like to put a human face on this issue. Last year I read a statement from a proponent of the commercial airport at Homestead that said: "Is it Americans in inevitable right to have a quiet nature experience? And if so, why did you put a national park in the middle of an urban area?" I was really appalled by that statement because it showed such a fundamental misunderstanding of nature. I have the luxury of taking people to the Everglades, particularly people from the urban corp.

In December of last year, I took

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families from Liberty City, parents and children, and I'll tell you, they were amazed that there was this resource so close, so unspoiled in their backyards. I remember one parent looking at a fish and observing, oh my God, everything is so quiet, even the fish, they're not jumping around, they're not scared like in the urban areas. Another parent said, that's because they're here and they're protected. Nobody is trying to catch them, there's no sense of danger that there is in the urban area.

And so I say all of this to you to say that this push to put a commercial airport between two national parks really reflects the lack of information in the main stead ways of our communities about what the national parks stand for. They are the last back strips of woodlands in America and they belong to the American people.

I was at a meeting yesterday where I heard in an Everglades report that the Everglades National Bark, Biscayne National Park and Florida Keys combined put five billion dollars in the economy.

We all know that airport is a polluted facility, noise pollution, environmental pollution. Why are we acting in the year 2000 posing the health

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of our community, the health of our environment against jobs?

There is a new paradigm emerging, people, that says we can use the environment, we can boost the environment to provide jobs. I fully support those people in Homestead and in those areas that they need jobs to support their families, but I say to you, the mixed-use proposal or any other proposal than that toxic polluted, noise polluted airport, which eliminates the purpose of the natural park, which is objectivity for peace, quiet and solitude, which are abandoned if you have an airport there. I say to you, don't do that, please.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: We're going to take a ten-minute recess for the benefit of the court reporter.

Kim Anderson.

000315 KIM ANDERSON: Thank you. I am Kim Anderson. I thank you for the opportunity to come tonight. We have many facts and figures that occurred throughout the days' testimony. There are many things I think you're missing in this. There's a couple of points I would like to address.

We heard things about promises. If we

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look back in the history of Florida, we know that the first governor was elected on the promise of draining that darn swamp. Now, here we are, many years later, knowing that we're in the eve of destruction. This is a systematic approach. We must understand that what is going on down here in Biscayne and Everglades National Park and the water sources, the water shed as a whole. Talk about the socio-economics, look at our fisheries. It is proven that Biscayne Bay is a feeder to fisheries throughout the Keys.

We also understand, this goes to the economics of the Keys. Our Keys' reefs are the number one dive spot in the world, and you may ask yourself, why does that have to do with Homestead Airport? We know that the sediments, the things that come from the air, what's released from hydrocarbons and they go into sediments, the bend of the community, it goes up the system.

We also know that what happens up stream effects our coral reefs down stream, that's why we've integrated task forces that's representative of all the communities. Problem is, there's a lot of evidence we would like to see out there. The sound information was not as much that still needs

to be done. I don't think there's enough on that.

We understanding there's two national parks there, national parks have a much different ambiance. The national park system has a mandate for visitor experience, and the visitor experience is more than sight, it's sound, that's an important aspect to occur today, to exist.

I'll end in conclusion, we support a mixed-use concept. Air Base as we know it, growing is not compatible, and this is a nationwide issue. It isn't worth to have our local constituents weighing in on this. This is a national issue as well.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Scott Socha.

000316 SCOTT SOCHA: I'm a student at Miami-Dade Honors Department in the Wilson Campus, and I moved here a little over a year ago from Alaska.

I try to think of many things I could say today and it seems like a lot of people said things I wanted to say. You can't really put a price tag on the spiritual benefit of natural parks for the people, for humanity. I stand for humanity.

And what is going to be sacred ground. When are people going to put up boarders, and say, no more, this is sacred ground, and we're at a point in society this is crucial.

50 years ago, 100 years ago we could afford to make mistakes, but not anymore. We're at a cruciate point. I think what happened with the Everglades with the draining of the swamp there? This would add insult to injury. I think Florida residents and national residents should say, "no more." And that's all I'm saying.

Thanks.

COLONEL McSHANE: Blanca Mesa. Next speaker will be Charles Munroe.

000317 BLANCA MESA: Thank you. I'm Blanca Mesa. I just want to say a few things to the SEIS. Regarding the mitigation efforts, they say this airport can be done with extensive mitigation efforts. I just want to point out what they are and what needs to be done about it. Before the Air Force crosses over, I want you to realize we're in Miami-Dade County, a lot of promises can be made, but they won't be completed, so I want them assured.

Two studies that were supposed to be completed long ago, two years ago, Miami-Dade County

promised to complete an ag-protection site to protect the agricultural lands in South Dade, they promised to complete the Biscayne Bay Water Management plant, both of which were vehemently opposed by a very preponderance of this airport. These are land-use plans that are supposed to protect our water shed, protect our agricultural land. The Farm Bureau and its principle people are objecting to this. To date this has not been done. The administration of Miami-Dade County has not shown the leadership to get these done.

Another thing that was supposed to happen was buffer land. That's one of key portion of this mitigation plan. I want to tell you UDB is east of this airport. There's land in agricultural land. That line is not a solid line. If you're depending on that line to stay to protect the bay to acted as mitigation. The UDB has shifted continuously in Dade County in the past 20 years, particularly in the West and Kendall, it will continue. It is, in fact, an urban expansion area, exactly where you say the lands remain agricultural. That's not true. In fact, everything the Farm Bureau wants to do is protect that land from being developed.

There are no plans and no funds identified for these mitigation efforts. I would like to see that identified in the SEIS.

I also want to say that everyone's talking about balancing the environment and economy. It's impossible to balance when on one side of the balancing scale is a polluting, industrial complex such as an airport doesn't make any sense. Mr. Mayor Penelas who's my boss, I work for Miami-Dade County, has said that in the last 40 years the military airport coexisted with the environment, the economy and the Everglades and Biscayne National Park has flourished, but he's very misinformed. He needs explained to him that, in fact, the Everglades are dying. That's why they're undergoing a multi-million dollar restoration efforts. In Biscayne Bay, what the military left behind was 15 million plus in environmental toxins, all from the airport. So I don't think that's a coexistence that we can be proud of.

And the military contaminated canals, it's full of toxins and floating into the bay and nobody can figure out how to stop it. That's something we should proceed with before another airport, when we have toxins the military left

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behind.

So I don't think that when the Farm Bureau talks about expenses and Dade County talks about promises, that we can rely on those at this time. And I would not support this airport until we have this mitigation and funding in place and we've really studied what Dade County has done in the past.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Manual Ortiz after Mr. Munroe.

000318 CHARLES MUNROE: Good evening. I'm Charles Monroe. And I'm here to represent not only myself, but members of the Biscayne Yacht Club, whose members have been enjoying Biscayne Bay for the last 113 years.

I live in Miami primarily because of Biscayne Bay, because I enjoy it, and I not only enjoy the waters, but I enjoy the quietness and the solitude that the bay offers. And, I mean, I've can live in Fort Lauderdale or Orlando, but Biscayne Bay is the unique thing that makes Miami special. So I'm concerned about the welfare of Biscayne Bay. And I go there and I think visitors go there because not only the beautiful water and the environment,

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but because of the quietness and the serenity, and as our community gets larger and larger and more and more people come here, we need quiet places to renew ourselves.

I think it would be a disaster to build an airport and then five or ten or 20 years from now and say, I'm reading the Miami Herald or something, we made a mistake, we underestimated the amount of noise and pollution that this airport is going to create, and by that time it's too late. We don't just decide to bulldoze the airport down and plant trees.

So I do believe that we have an alternative that's available to us, to give jobs and help to South Dade, although I heard unemployment is not in dire trouble. So I urge the Commission to please consider an alternative to anything but an airport.

Thank you very much.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Manuel Ortiz.

000319 MANUEL ORTIZ: I would like to first thank the Air Force for this opportunity to be heard. I'm a Dade County resident. I support the program for an option, because I think it is the

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only option to maximize and promote the economy.

I trust and support federal studies who have found a commercial airport would not substantially alter the environment. That being said, I am of the opinion that a plan that would inject 38,000 jobs and 1 million into the economy to a community who's in desperate need of economic development is needed.

I support the airport because it addresses the economic, environmental concerns, and the truth is, South Dade needs these jobs. The county needs an airport and it means over a million dollars in earnings and the airport wouldn't harm the environment.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Nadine Patrice followed by John Spillman.

000320 NADINE PATRICE: Hello, my name is Nadine Patrice, and I'm with the organization called Operation Green Leaf. We provide environmental education for changing communities. Although, jobs would be a great thing for our community, but I don't believe at the expense of a natural resources.

I also want to say that I heard somebody say that everybody in Homestead is for the airport,

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I believe they are incorrect. There is a farm association, and there's at least 200 households in this group that are totally opposed to this airport. And the other thing I want to say is that we need to learn from the other parts of the world where we're pushing jobs, jobs, jobs at the expense of the environment.

The Rain Forest, they want to cut down all the trees and they were talking about jobs, jobs, jobs, look at the results today? We cannot afford to make the same mistakes, by cutting all the trees all over the world and the Rain Forest, now you can see how our climate has been affected. We have floods, tons of people are dying. We have to learn from the past, because if we make this mistake, like the other gentleman said, it will be very difficult to try to do the clean up. So I urge you to listen to us and we totally oppose the airport.

We have to learn from the other areas and not make this mistake, but it will be a mistake and cost us too much money to try to clean up. Let's not make a mistake from the other part of the world. There are other alternative to jobs.

Thank you.

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COLONEL McSHANE: John Spillman.

000321 JOHN SPILLMAN: Thank you. My name is John Spillman, I'm the chairman of the Aviation Alliance of Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.

Two years ago, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce unanimously urged that former Homestead Air Force Base be converted to a military/civilian use for scheduled cargo and passenger air service.

Tonight I'm here to reiterate that view, that the Chamber supports the conversion of the base and returning the land to Metro Dade County.

Further, the Chamber supports the development of the land in a manner which can create meaningful employment and investment opportunities in the context of safeguarding our national parks.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Julie Romero.

000322 JULIE ROMERO: Good evening, Colonel, and everyone that's involved with us. Good evening to South Dade. I am here representing three hats, one hat as a business owner, as a reality check to what South Dade is all about. Second I'm here as an environmentalist, and third I'm here as a mother.

First as a business owner, I am the past

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chair of the City of Homestead Chamber of Commerce and I'm also the past chair for the Florida Employment Advisory Council. For those people who keep quoting numbers on unemployment in South Dade, don't quote numbers, come to South Dade. For those of you who quote number on businesses and our economy, don't quote the numbers. Come to South Dade.

If you drive down US-1 and you visit Naranja, and you see those strip malls empty and you go to your friend's home who have lost their businesses, lost their homes, their children have been adversely affected because of the closing of the Homestead Base, and because of what happened in Hurricane Andrew, and our economy. That's reality.

As a business owner we see our friends trying to struggle to make it there. I am an environmentalist, I'm here to tell you that South Dade, we the people of South Dade have maintained our national parks. We're the ones who have been the in-keepers, we have been the ones who have been taking care of it.

And these environmentalists who sit here today talking and telling us what to do with it, we're the ones who live there every day. We're the

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ones that drink the water, we're the ones that take the air in. We have our children growing up in that area, and we are the ones that don't want anything to happen to it. But at the same time as an environmentalist, you know what guys, save the humans, humans have habitat too. We need jobs. And with those jobs, we need to maintain our families. What we need, we need the jobs to be able to go to the stores and shop.

I invite the 600,000 environmentalists to shop in our stores, to eat in our restaurants, to go to the grocery store, then we wouldn't have a problem, but you guys fly in and you fly out, and you tell us what to do with our place. We fought to keep Homestead Air Base there when they wanted to close it.

Then, as a mother, I tell the Federal government the following, I have raised two children and have a third one, to respect the laws, to respect federal government. We were promised by two presidents that we would be the state of the art model to the nation of a commercial airport. So I taught my kids that I keep my promises. Does the federal government keep theirs?

Thank you.

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COLONEL McSHANE: Ron Rosenberg.

000323 RON ROSENBERG: I don't think 600,000 people would come unless there were parks to come to. So I think we can work together. I don't think we have to yell at each other.

I was born and raised in Florida, I lived in Miami and Homestead. And my dad raised me to go out in the Everglades, Biscayne National Park, go on a canoe and we would spend weekends and recharge our batteries. I've re-moved to Miami. My wife and I live now in downtown. I work as a lawyer for the Justice Department. At the end of the week I'm frazzled, because this is a real tough city to live in, and I still need the Everglades and Biscayne National Park to recharge my batteries. My wife and I hope to have kids in the next few years. Please consider Fort Lauderdale as an alternative airport and the mixed-use plan.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Susannah Troner followed by Marcela McGrath.

000324 SUSANNAH TRONER: Good evening. I'm also speaking as a concerned citizen who has lived here almost all of my life. I would like to re-do the words of a scientist, Meadows.

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We talk about jobs, taxes, quantities and, therefore, legitimate considerations. Other considerations seem not quite legitimate to talk about, because they are qualities, it's tough to stand up and tell me in town meetings and talk about health, beauty and community, it just isn't done. In fact, qualities are very real and are ultimately what count. Community development decisions on behalf a community, the land and the future, we have to use a higher human faculty than the simple ability to count. We have to ask quality questions. So what quality questions can we ask with regards to this issue? How about we meet the goals of re-developing the base in a way that benefits the economy of South Miami-Dade without it impacting the environment and our national parks. Something that's compatible with the unprecedented restoration efforts being directed at Everglades. Would you really want to go fishing, camping or sailing with plane after plane swimming overhead? What are all those tourists coming down to see after all? Quiet, tranquility, beauty and wildlife. If choosing to build a commercial airport leads us to an unknown future, the operations estimates can be contained in the SEIS and are very uncertain.

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To compound this problem is the fact that to the best of my knowledge the FAA cannot limit the number of airports built due to interstate commerce, and this lack of control is frankly to me a scary thing.

The mixed-use alternative, on the other hand, allows us to enhance our economy without such negative environmental impacts, what we call a win win solution. That's just common sense.

So I ask you to use your courage, use your common sense, and to show vision when you make your decision.

Please ask yourself quality questions and come up with a quality decision, do not convey the property for a commercial airport.

COLONEL McSHANE: Marcela McGrath. After that Santiago Leon.

000325 MARCELA MCGRATH: Good evening, my name is Marcela McGrath. I live in Miami Lakes, which is far from Homestead. However, I enjoy the Everglades. I enjoy the national parks. I enjoy the tranquility and the peace and quiet, and we think nothing on a Saturday or Sunday to just drive down Krome Avenue with low traffic and go far, just to spend a couple of hours either bicycling or

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walking or relaxing. We refresh ourselves and we come back rested and ready for the week.

I know that the City of Homestead was severely affected by Hurricane Andrew. I know that it needs jobs and industry, but if we're here for the best long-term use of the area that the Air Force and government wanted to give to the county, the best use would be the mixed-use of the Collier proposal, it would not give the air pollution, it would not given increased people, traffic, buildings, roads, it would revitalize the strip malls.

Last summer we went vacationing in North Carolina, and we visited Great Smoky National Park and we crossed over in 35 miles an hour, there was nothing, nothing, park, animals, we saw bears, we saw everything, but we come out of the park and we're confronted by this city smog, with lights, with noise, with people, with cars, with everything there. It was awful. It was shocking, and I can only imagine our relatives and our Biscayne National Park that people come to see. I don't want them to go and have that same experience. I want them to have the experience of going to a rural area. If Homestead can be benefited by having the

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Collier/Hoover proposal, it will have jobs, it will have industry, and our main industry is tourism. They are proposing things for tourism, golf resorts.

I believe that we don't need to destroy the natural beauty of Homestead and the surrounding areas, the Redlands, Naranja, Florida City by approving the commercial airport expansion. I believe that we should do the best and use it for the best to keep our tourism growing and to keep our tourism which brings the dollars into the country.

I live in Miami Lakes and I know people from Miami Lakes that say that is not a good alternative. Opa-Locka, it was used when Hurricane Andrew struck the area, and believe me, I'd much rather have the noise over my house than all the national parks, because the national parks are for all of us, millions of us, not just the city, the people that live in the city right there.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Mr. Leon.

000326 SANTIAGO LEON: My name is Santiago Leon, I'm Hispanic, active member of Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. I must say nobody ever asked me what I thought about the Homestead Airport and the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. I can tell

you that the opinion of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce would not have been unanimous on the subject.

First of all, procedural objections, I think the Air Force should be very circumspect about his partner as the lead agency in the Environmental Impact Statement, specifically the Federal Aviation Administration. The FAA has trouble leasing the interior environment of an airplane, much less the environmental impact of an airport.

Another thing is why take the operations of the Air Force Base as a base line. It was the Air Force Base that chased the Flamingos away from Flamingo.

We would not be talking about an airport at all but for a sweetheart deal, a give away to a small group of politically connected developers who got a deal on a no-bid contract for free land.

As far as I'm concerned, to give those people anything would be perpetuated government paid contract, which is what we've had in Dade County.

I urge you also to follow the language, you'll notice the Homestead Airport they're talking about is a quote unquote, reliever airport. Does that sound like a half penny sales tax for those of

you who live out here. This is a great big busy airport, you can't have it both ways.

The same way with the Environmental Impact Statement, no significant impact, no substantial impact, nothing significantly frightened. If you really need an airport, we should do it the old fashioned way, we should go out and buy the land and build an airport. It's been observed that you don't see the Federal Express people down here worried about what's happening. Why is that? Maybe they don't need an airport. Maybe this airport would be a gigantic boon dock, a lot of asphalt with no airplanes.

Next, spending millions to fix the result of past projects. We have been in Florida spending billions to fix the results of past projects which were thought to have no significant impact, reliever canals and such, okay, I can see doing exactly the same thing. We've previously observed that we're going to do exactly the same thing with this.

As to the question of jobs and environment and the airport, there seems to be jobs as an issue, the environment as an issue, the airport is an issue. If we need an airport, we

should think about where we should put one.

And, finally, I think that the other proposal sounds like a reason why people would want to go to South Dade. I can see real synergies between parks and the aquarium kind of development, an environmentally educationally attractive environment that would create more jobs, more economic development than any of us can imagine.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Nancy Lee followed by Carrie Cleland.

000327 NANCY LEE: Hi. I just wanted to mention that even though they need jobs in Washington D.C., they're not putting a Home Depot next to the Washington Monument.

The past few nights you've heard the director of Miami-Dade Aviation Department speak about the Department's wonderful environmental record. I would like to submit to you that that picture is not as rosy as you would be led to believe.

The County's Environmental Department produces an annual report, which I would like to submit to you, documenting violations of environmental regulations at government facilities

and properties in Miami-Dade County. The December, '99 issue of that report indicates that the Aviation Department's wonderful environmental record includes 57 sites with violations, many of which involve ground or ground water contamination.

In addition to the dozens of violations at MIA, these violations also exist at Homestead General Airport, Opa-Locka Airport and Tamiami Airport. I don't want to imply that the Aviation Department is directly responsible for every case listed, as there are a number of cases where former airport attendants contributed to the contamination and the Department is stuck with the clean up, and I don't want to imply that the Department is doing nothing to address the existing contamination issues.

However, it is the Department's responsibility to provide some oversight to prevent incidents, such as those documented here from happening in first course.

To my knowledge, the SEIS did not involve a review of the environmental record of the Aviation Department, the agency that would be playing a major role in everyday operation management of air pump facility. The years worth of

records are sitting downtown for review and the compliance issue or lack thereof is clear. I think this needs to be given serious thought.

The days of being reactive have to stop. In this case, the ability to respond to problems and address environmental concerns after an incident has occurred and nothing is to be impressed on. Mechanisms need to be in place to prevent such occurrences, maybe the Department recognizes that now, maybe they don't. Based upon what I see before me, I'm not willing to take that chance.

In closing, I would like to point out that the Air Force is still spending a lot of money to clean up and monitor contaminated sites at the former Homestead Air Force Base, items which are also identified in this report. When that job is finally completed, is this the agency you want to turn this property over to? I hope if you consider this, its compliance records, you will conclude that the answer to my question is no.

Thank you.

And I live six miles from MIA and I can hear the planes taking off.

000328 CARRIE CLELAND: My dad and my brother over there, dad was in the Air Force, he was a tail

gunner over Italy. If he were alive today, he would be here with us and his kids. He's the one who first showed us the Everglades, when we were little of course.

I used to be a flight attendant, and I just love planes. I would like to add my voice for my former passengers, there's a tremendous number of people who travel here specifically to enjoy our unique environmental assets. Those people of course are not here to tell you how important our wildlife and health to the Everglades are to them. Remember that those folks, also known as tourists, also need jobs. Let's protect our irreplaceable assets. Wildlife is not replaceable and extinct.

Concrete, as my brother points out, is always the last crop planted. Jobs are replaceable, ask anyone who used to work for Eastern or FP&L, it's not that easy to get a good airline job, good jobs come to those who get good educations.

One thing, as you deliberate, please consider your opinions seven generations into the future.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Richard Friedman.

000329 RICHARD FRIEDMAN: Thank you, Colonel.

I'm Richard Friedman. I'm here as an individual. I've lived in this area 41 years. I've lived in Pine Crest for almost 30 years. That's about 15 miles north of Homestead. It seems to me we're tail wagging the dog here.

In the last 40, 50 years they've done very little for Homestead, which is a town of 10,000 people and Florida City which is a town maybe of 7,000 people. So I don't see that an environmental treasure, which is an international treasurer should be impaired in order to give jobs to two towns of 10,000 and 7,000 where Dade County, I might add, has done the following three things for them: They've given them a homeless shelter, they've put up a baseball park, where there's no team to play baseball in a park. And they have given them a Homestead Raceway, which is a NASCAR track. So those three things have happened in Homestead in the last eight years.

The fact is that when we talk about South Dade, we talk about Flagler Street south, that's a million people, we are not talking about Flagler Street south, we're talking about south of 211th Street, from a shopping center which was rebuilt, an Auto Nation Automobile place that was

built in South Dade. A lot of things have occurred in South Dade.

You destroy the Everglades, you're going to lose your tourism business. It's important. We are trustees of nature. We have a spaceship earth and we have to protect what we can on earth.

The fact is that 15 year projections, anybody can make any kinds of projections in 15 years. What I do know, is there's 25 locations for potential airports, three are smack dab in the middle of the Everglades, and there's a blank card that shows that 680,000 flights by 2015, 235,000 more with this one runway, one runway, not two, which would be 915,000 capacity in the year 2015. That same blank card says in 15 years will be 932,000. That means, if you go ahead and build this alleged airport, the capacity of that airport and MIA will be under the capacity needed in 15 years, then I ask, what about the other 17,000 flights? Are they going to build another runway, three runways, five runways? There's seven runways now in South Florida. So the fact is even based upon on the county's numbers, you have a lack of capacity 2015. What do you do then? And you've mitigated the Everglades. The word mitigation, there has been

a problem with mitigate the problem, obviously, we'll anticipate we'll have an environmental problem because we have to mitigate it. Therefore, we're saying we're going to screw it up. We have to make it less of a screw up, and the people who are doing the screw up for us are the same people that right now politically were trying to get rid of the running the airport, because right now we want to make it into an independent authority, and get rid of the people in Dade County from running an airport because of the corruption and the stakes.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Joy Roselyn Lumbly followed by Carlos Golts.

000330 JOY ROSELYN LUMBLY: Good evening, my name is Joy Roselyn Lumbly, I'm a long time resident of South Florida. I first came in sight with Everglades National Park through environmentalists Frank and Audrey Pitterman of Earthwise Productions, Inc. We traveled there for the first time with Audrey, other adults and children from our communities. It was a peaceful and amazingly wonderful world.

Speaking as a person of the earth, I hold the earth to be a sacred place. There's only

one earth. We have few places left where we can meditate in peace on what the creator gave us as a gift void of man's selfish greedy, and self-indulging exploitment. The Everglades National Park is such a place, there is a place for peace.

My daughter says, we as Floridians must stand up for Florida, for the Everglades, we live here, we drink our water here. I am against the airport being built in Homestead. The indigenous peoples once observed themselves destruct the earth for the lack of vision. Look at America. It is self-destructive for the lack of vision. If this airport is built, one day we'll self-destruct for the lack of vision. We'll say, we should have listened. My mother always says, if you don't hear, you'll feel.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Rock Simpson.

000331 ROCK SIMPSON: First of all, I'd like to go on record supporting the redevelopment of the Homestead Air Force Base as a commercial airport.

I think I'm more attune to speak on a lot of issues than most of the people here. I was born and raised here, been here 56 years. The Air Force Base was the foundation and stability of

Homestead and the surrounding areas. If it's rebuilt and to a sound environmentally sensitive community, it's going to help and form the foundation of redevelopment of that area and provide jobs for thousands of people who are in need of those jobs now.

Also, conservationists who speak here aren't even the true issues here in South Florida. They need to redirect their issues. Along with being a resident here, I'm a camp owner at the Big Cypress National Preserve. Not too far from me at night there are gold wells running around the clock. The Collier family is getting ready to put in 800 miles of additional roads in Big Cypress in 22 more well sites. Our freshwater supply is being contaminated from farmers, and saltwater is intruding into limestone from both sides of the coast.

You've got issues that are so much greater than this airport. You need to redirect your issues and thoughts. This isn't the problem that you need to be working on.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: That was all the cards we had for people who had not spoken before tonight.

Lloyd Brown still here? After that will be Alan Farago.

000332 LLOYD SIMPSON: Thank you once again. My name is Lloyd Brown, director of Wildlife Rescue in Dade County. And for once I'm actually glad I got to wait to the end. Because there's been a lot of issues brought up I would like to personally address. With the exception of the 14 years I spent in the Army as a paratrooper, I've been in this community my entire life. During my time in the Army I fought in two wars, and four peace keeping operations and like any of you here tonight, I have the privilege of having earned my rights as a citizen.

Now, I'm not going to go into the numbers about the unemployment, that's been brought up quite a few times tonight. I'll sufficit it to say the numbers have been falsely elevated. We have the statistics to prove it.

Tuesday night the young man said he would rather see an airplane crash in the Everglades than he would see an airplane crash in Hialeah. And I would admit, we would be better off, I won't deny that.

However, how many of us here would like

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to see a fully loaded cargo 747, or an AM-124 crash into the Turkey Point Nuclear Power plant? The woman here tonight said that's impossibile. The nuclear power plant is not threatened by the airplanes. May I remind, Monday afternoon Alaska Airlines MD-83 went completely out of control, flight crewmen had no control of where that aircraft went. Well, what happened if that would have been South Dade?

The EIS says that's it's going to be a good idea to build an airport here in South Dade. There was also a similar EIS a few years ago in Valdez, Alaska they said it was a good idea to put an oil terminal there. There's also one in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania that it would be a good idea to be put a nuclear power plant out on Three Mile Island.

In closing, I will say I attended the Chamber of Commerce South meeting last week, and there was not a consensus of support for a commercial airport, it was pretty evenly split among the mixed-use alternative and the commercial airport.

Wildlife Rescue of Dade County supports the mixed-us alternative as put forth by the

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Collier/Hoover Group Foundation. At that meeting, a banker told me that he thought environmental politics has its place, but we have to take consideration of the people first. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to say that unless you have another planet in mind to live on, the place for environmental politics is right here.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Alan Farago. Dr. Robert Cruz on deck.

000333 ALAN FARAGO: My name is Alan Farago, I'm with the Sierra Club in Miami. I would like to address just two issues.

The first has to do with the part of the SEIS talks about the comprehensive development master plan process, which is the state process governing the reuse of the air bases. Sierra Club was involved on litigation on that issue. The SEIS does talk about state processes as being sufficient to cover certain environmental issues. We would like to go on record adding to the comments earlier by Richard Grosso that that process was a failure. We spent a lot of time in mediation. We did not reach any kind of agreement.

And to move on to the second point. I

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would like to submit to the record a resolution by the Monroe County Commission that was filed for record on February 1st. The resolution in which contrast to so many of the political figures who spoke on Tuesday night in support of the commercial airport, Monroe County has a multi-million dollar tourism based economy, with the citizens who are entirely dependent on a healthy environment. The County Commission of Monroe County passed a resolution that resolves that the U.S. Air Force and the FAA will include the Environmental Impact Study and have a public hearing in Key Largo, and, furthermore, the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida supports the conveyance of the former Homestead Air Force Base for development alternatives other than a commercial airport.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Dr. Robert Cruz. On deck will be Elizabeth Tyre.

000334 DR. ROBERT CRUZ: Good evening, members of the panel and the public. We're still here. I'm going to talk to you just about one specific issue here, and that is the feasibility of the alternative plans to redevelop in the area.

You've heard tonight and over the course

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of your public hearings many arguments in favor of - any sound arguments in favor of the County's proposal. All of these arguments are supported by your own study conducted by a panel, independent panel of experts, but one of the things that happens here that I have to disagree with and I point out that the statement that the alternative proposal will create almost as many jobs as the County's proposal. I think that statement is, in fact, very misleading and inaccurate for the following reasons:

The alternative mixed-use proposal is really a combination, vaguely described combination of two previously competing proposals. And, in fact, you cannot overlay those two alternative proposals and create one proposal. You've got two proposals that are basically using the same land area with different uses. For example, the Hoover proposal have residential development where the Collier proposal had the RV park and golf course. I know you can't do that. We know those kind of things can't be done. You can't create or develop industrial space on top of golden space. That's what the two previous proposals have done.

So you if you take these two proposals and say now we're going to merge them, you really

can't add economic impact of those two proposals. That doesn't work.

In fact, if you do have in combination with these two proposals, which is well articulated, I think you're going to see the impacts that are going to be claimed are going to be much less when looked at from a scientific and technical point of view.

The other point that I would like to make is this notion that the alternative proposals are sound from a market demand point of view, and they are not. As I said, one of the proposals calls for residential development. In fact, there isn't really a demand for residential development in that area. There's also no evidence of a demand for a luxury RV park and golf course in that area.

The aquarium is the most speculative aspect of all of those two. It's just, the market demand really hasn't been proven. You have to really rework this in order to evaluate accurately the economic impact of that alternative proposal.

And I know my time is running out. Thank you for listening to my comments.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you.

000335 ELIZABETH TYRE: Good evening, my name

is Elizabeth Tyre, I am a resident of Naranja Preston Community. My house sits approximately 600 feet from what used to be the air base housing. I have been - this is the third night that I've been here listening to you all, the arguments, and I wanted to bring this little piece of information that I found in the, actually, it's in the appendix section of the SEIS report. It's Exhibit 1-1, Appendix A, in the Appendices.

This shows that in 1999 Landerman and Brown reevaluated the numbers that were submitted in 1994, and there's a page this long. I couldn't get it magnified.

One of the problems that I have with politicians coming to our area and telling us that we're going to get 38,000 jobs and a billion dollars is that when I look at these figures in this report, none of them seem to add up.

This chart right here shows that the forecasted operations have been changed in four different ways, and the last one shows that the forecasted operations is much lower than what it would be for 2015.

I don't know who to believe. I've got politicians screaming they want an airport where

what used to be a base. All I can tell you is that in South Dade, the children that go to school in Naranja want the ability to make money for lives and their education. What they've been offered by Dade County through the Dade County School Board is a series of magnet programs that feed them from the middle school age into travel agency magnets. They're also fed into, offer the chance to attend Mask Academy on Key Biscayne and study marine biology and given the transportation to get there.

Now, after reading through this report and seeing the Hoover and the Collier plan and actually living there, we do have an RV park at the very end of the street from Naranja Elementary School and there is a very dedicated loyal group of French Canadians that use it every year. Our children have the chance to work in a travel agency to promote the tourism. The marine biology program at Mask Academy would help them work with aqua-agriculture that they can actually apply an education to.

So it's 2,717 days since Hurricane Andrew, and we still don't know what's going to happen to our community.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Ramon Rasco.

000336 RAMON RASCO: Thank you, Your Honor. For those of you left here, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Ramon Rasco. I represent the developers selected by Miami-Dade County in a lawful, competitive and very public process. That after many public hearings resulted in the award of a very fair and inclusive lease for the development with private sectors dollars of a clean high-tech airport that is compatible with our environment.

Earlier you heard aviation director Gary Dellapa show conclusive evidence that this community needs another airport, and the most logical and suitable place is Homestead.

There is simply no other feasible site, not in Opa-Locka, not in Fort Lauderdale or any other place in South Florida. After seven years of the most comprehensive, the best and the most expensive studies in our nation's history, we have now seen the results in a draft SEIS, which was so strongly requested by environmental groups.

Now, some of those, of the more extreme environmental groups are ignoring the study and trying to intimidate our community with litigation. I say to them, let them put up a bomb big enough to

stop this project, we'll not be intimidated.

The Sierra attorneys, Mr. Grosso or anybody else that spoke here tonight has offered one single environmental study that shows any damage will come to our parks or our communities as a result of this airport. In fact, the SEIS which is an independent conducted study and objective and scientific study conclusively shows that the airport can be without damages to our parks or environment with the appropriate mitigation methods.

In addition to the SEIS and the other federal studies, as Mayor Penelas said, over 27 other mitigation studies have been developed by the county to mitigate the impact on the environment. The developer, my client, has never ever been opposed to any mitigation plan regardless of what's been said here before and, in fact, is committed to implementing appropriate mitigation efforts to build an airport and our environment.

The Collier Group is not here, has not been here for any of these hearings, the plan has not been the subject of any public hearing or public scrutiny in this community; it has not been approved by the local state or environmental agency or government. Instead the Collier group is in

Washington, bypassing, trying to take for themselves the land. It is well documented in the press in other cities, not in our city and should be investigated by the Air Force before any further consideration is given to their plan, they have tried to swap their mineral rights in five or six other communities, most recently in Orlando. Every single one of these communities has told them no.

Ladies and gentlemen, an airport at the former Homestead Base is the best plan for our community. It balances economic opportunity with environmental responsibilities for our parks and our wildlife. Don't take my word for it, read the SEIS.

COLONEL McSHANE: Buddy Howanitz.

000337 BUDDY HOWANITZ: I appreciate the time to be here tonight. I waited quite late the other night, but it was getting rather late, so we left at 10:30. I wasn't called. I do appreciate the opportunity.

I have lived in Dade County over 50 years now. I grew up right down the street on 58th Avenue and 12th Street, but for many years I've lived in the area which is now affected by the Air Base. I live in a very nice area, and I have a horse ranch there, but one thing that happens is,

every day I go down there, I go through communities that are devastated. They've been devastated since Hurricane Andrew.

I go on Saturdays to Home Depot, and if anyone lives in South Dade and goes to Home Depot off US-1, you'll see no fewer than 150 people standing on the side of the road looking for jobs. These people aren't people on welfare, these are people that need jobs. There are communities that have legitimately suffered. They're suffering today. I don't think there is a person that hasn't been here that's not sensitive to the, including myself. We love the outdoors, fish the Everglades, fish the bay. I think the best we can hope for is the opportunity to have a plan of growth. We can't stop growth, we can't stop development, but we can certainly hope that we can be a part in a progressive growth. I think that, in my opinion, at least, I don't know enough about the effects, but I can and I did read the SEIS report. I do know that from what's been reported, that the damage is not what it's claimed to be by the environmentalists that may be here today.

Recently, the same environmentalists cost the county 27 million dollars to buy a circle

that we very gladly sold. I was part of the group that sold that to the County for 27 million, but that's what the environmentalists did.

So thank you for your time.

COLONEL McSHANE: Jonathan Ullman followed by Ignacio Sanchez.

000338 JONATHAN ULLMAN: My name is Jonathan Ullman. I'm the South Florida Everglades representative for the National Sierra Club. We're an organization that cares deeply for the national parks. I wanted to say that I keep hearing over and over again that this SEIS says that no harm will come to the national parks. Well, it never said that. And anybody who says that is incorrect, because here's what the SEIS does say.

The SEIS says that we will have a little less than one operation a minute just two miles from Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park. It says these flights will be in altitudes of lower longer because of MIA's air space to the north. It says that the sound will be equivalent to a power lawnmower three feet away. It says that the proposed airport will have increased nutrient pollution to Biscayne Bay. It says the airport will increase nitrates by 54 times. It says that there

will be a significant increase of air pollutants, polycycline and hydrocarbons, and among those is toxins to marine life.

It says that development associated with the airport will result in destruction of thousands of acres of agriculture and wildlife. It says that daily emissions of seven toxic like nitrous oxide, and other organic compounds will there be. Nitrous oxide levels will be increased ten times in Biscayne National Park and 45 times in Everglades National Park. And there are other things that SEIS didn't say. It didn't look at what will happen to the national parks and the environment to South Dade after the plan's second runway, if there is a planned second runway, which I would hope this will not be, because I don't think there should be a first runway. Storm water management plan, the SEIS assumes the plan will be 100 percent effective, but the County's own experts stated its design is inadequate to handle large storms and the plan is currently being challenged in contamination and quantities.

And finally the SEIS assumes that the UDB will not move, UDB is an urban development operation and minimizes the extent of development

associated with the airport and consequently the environmental impacts. This is one thing I can prove. (Thereupon, a video was shown.)

Now, that video was good, but this is the reality.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Mr. Sanchez.

000339 IGNACIO SANCHEZ: Good evening, Colonel, thank you for another opportunity to address the draft SEIS.

It's interesting to note that previous speakers comments attacking the airport proposal and this shows the good faith of HABDI and Dade County. Our plan is on the record, it's there for everybody to see. It's there for everybody to critic. It's impossible to critic, and therefore, it's impossible for you to evaluate the Collier/Hoover proposal. It's not on the record, nobody knows what it will do. It doesn't have any remediation plan. It doesn't have any kind of discussion with regards to the phosphorus based chemicals that will be used on the golf course. I don't envy your job, but it is very difficult to do, and that plan is yet to exist.

With respect to the draft SEIS, I want to also point out that the one thing these folks

convinced me of is that - one lady in particular - she's been living here since 1950, how much she enjoys the park. I wanted to remind everybody that Biscayne National Park did not become a park until 1980. Everglades did not become a park until 1947. The Air Force Base was put there in 1942. It was there before those two parks and those same alligators that they enjoyed, the same snakes and same birds have coexisted with B-52's and F-16's, and they're still there for everybody to enjoy, and they've all testified for three days how much they enjoyed that park. They were all there while B-52's and F-16's were taking off at a pace that will far exceed anything that this airport will have. I support the proposed action for conversion of Homestead Air Force Base to a commercial airport.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Paul Acosta. Next on deck is Alex Heckler.

000340 PAUL ACOSTA: Good evening. My name is Paul Acosta. I wanted to thank you once again for allowing me to address this distinguished panel.

In 1992 Hurricane Andrew devastated South Miami-Dade County. For eight years South Miami-Dade County has heard promise after promise,

unfortunately none of those promises have been delivered. We've all heard President Clinton tell us the other night in the State of the Union Address the United States of American is moving to the new millennium with over 20 million new jobs. We're experiencing at this time now the fastest economic growth and the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years.

Unfortunately, South Miami-Dade County is not going along for that ride. They're experiencing right now 15 percent unemployment rate. I'm here to tell you the County's reuse plan will help South Miami-Dade County to get back on track. Based on the SEIS figures, it is estimated that we'll be looking at 38,000 new jobs with about one billion in earnings per year.

Now, sometimes we hear some of these astronomical figures and we really can't comprehend them. Some 20 million new jobs, you know, fastest economic growth rate, all these things that are things we really can't comprehend, but let me give you something that you can as it relates to job variations.

I said this the other night, I was cut off short unfortunately. Miami-Dade County right now is the single largest employer in Dade County.

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I'm talking about the government structure, they belong to 28,000 people, this plan proposes 38,000 jobs. What we have before us simply is an economic machine, but unfortunately now for over six years since the final SEIS report was released in 1994, we haven't been able to turn that engine on. Please let us do that now.

Now, the eleventh hour, we have a Collier plan, we're not exactly sure what this plan is, but with the most generous estimates possible, we're looking at best possibly 14,000 new jobs. About 350 million claiming in earnings. I have a hard time realizing those numbers or seeing those numbers when it's centered around two golf centers and a mobile home park.

The average aviation job will generate a salary of approximately $38,000 a year, that's 32 percent more than what your average recreational job will generate. And this is straight out of the SEIS. As far as it relates to the Collier plan, it's estimated to be the least intensive alternative.

The time has come, this community has suffered and endured enough. I urge you to support the County's reuse plan.

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COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Jamie Brown. On deck is Felix Hector.

000341 JAMIE BROWN: First I wanted to thank the Air Force for your great work and your patience over these three days. I'm sure it's been a long three days for you.

I am stunned that the national representative of the Sierra Club stood here tonight and tried to make the case that there's not a serious economic need in South Dade.

I just wanted to extend an invitation, sometime in between February 20th Naranja is having a community council meeting. I will drive you down there so you can sit in front of those folks and tell them they don't have an economic need. There's a 30 poverty rate in Homestead, 37 percent in Florida City, it's been declared poverty zone. And the Housing and Urban Development Secretary has said that this is one of the few pockets of poverty in the country. So I'm happy to drive you down there so you can tell the folks that they're doing all right.

I also wanted to mention in the waiting hours of the SEIS public hearings that in terms of the Collier plan, I started out the week fairly

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skeptical about what it would do for the community, at the end of the week, I am incredibly skeptical. It's definitely reinforced my opinion that it just won't work. It's smoke in mirrors. There's plenty of land down there right now to build a golf course and all these great things, but somebody's figured out, the market needs are not there, otherwise it would have been done right now.

So I hope nobody counts on this for being a solution for some folks that really need some help down there. Thanks.

000342 FELIX RODRIGUEZ: Good evening. My name is Felix Rodriguez. The last time I testified before this panel I stated that building a golf course and business complex next to a military base was not the brightest idea for obvious reasons. I also stated that the commercial airport proposal was the better of the two proposals regarding the redevelopment of the Homestead Air Reserve Base. I used nothing more than a bit of common sense and some first-hand accounts to prove my point, but I left unsatisfied with my argument.

So being a college student, I decided to do some research regarding the Collier proposal. I sat in front of my computer for hours looking

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through newspaper archives and alike. What I found was an incredible amount of information that I was not privy to when I first testified before this panel.

I found out this is not the first time the Colliers have tried to swap mineral rights for air bases. In fact, they have been unsuccessful three other times that I can account for. The San Diego Union Tribune reported in 1996 that the Colliers tried this same kind of proposal in exchange for air bases in Orlando, San Francisco, and Orange County, California. Each time the decision-makers saw right through the Collier proposal and decided against giving away the air bases. The Union Tribune referred to this proposal as a "tycoon fantasy."

So I kept searching. And I stumbled upon an article in the Palm Beach Post entitled "Don't Trade Homestead." This article stated: "In the first place, it is not at all certain that the Colliers can get the drilling permits, the holes themselves are bad enough, but the roads needed to get through the equipment to the holes would be even worse for the fragile slum."

In other words, the Colliers well may be

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offering nothing. In return they will get three square miles of prime land in an urban area with all the public facilities in place for development. The article went on to state that: "Yet another upscale golf course subdivision with some artificial lakes and a few offices might help the Collier balance sheet, but it would do little or nothing for the areas around.

So at this point the Collier proposal looks even worse, but I kept searching and I found the most damaging account by far.

In April of 1999 Florida Today reported that, "If the government doesn't accept the deal, the Collier family of Naples threaten to extend oil exploration into 825 square miles of federally protected wilderness inhabited by animals such as bald eagles, wood storks and Florida panthers."

Now, as I said the other night, I'm not an expert, but I am interested in eventually becoming an attorney. An attorneys have a term for this, extortion. In this particular case, environmental extortion.

What the Colliers are basically saying to the government is hand over the air base or we're going to drill. But being the skeptic that I am, I

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noticed one major flaw in the threat, if drilling were viable, they would have done it by now. In fact, it seems the Colliers are desperate to get rid of the drilling rights. Why? Because they're worthless, it isn't cost effective to attempt to drill over protected lands.

Ironically though the interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt told the Colliers last year to go ahead and pursue the oil exploration permits. He must have precluded the same as I did, and decided that these were empty threats.

Final thought, the commercial airport keeps the land with part of the revenues going back to the people. The choice is obvious, this county needs another airport and Homestead could really use 38,000 new jobs.

Now I understand why the Colliers decided not to give a presentation regarding the project, it's full of holes.

COLONEL McSHANE: Howard Behar.

000343 HOWARD BEHAR: Good evening, Colonel, panel, and again, thank you for the opportunity to speaking again.

I would like to point out certain elements of the proposed action versus the Collier

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plan.

As part of the proposed action, the County set up 162 acres of an area to be set aside as a park for public use. However, the Collier plan absolutely robs the County of portions of this acreage for one reason only, to retain it as part of their project. Financial gain for a private developer. But it does not end there yet.

There was a portion also that was set aside to be set up for the School Board Advisory. However, the Collier plan took part of this portion of the school property, again, for one reason only, financial gain. And what did this do? This jeopardizes federal and state funding for the county school.

Obviously this appropriation of land should have come before some type of regulatory authority that could have had some type of decision-making authority to stop this type of action. Was it ever conducted in a hearing? No. Was there ever anything in front of the County Commission? No. The Water District in Palm Beach County? No. The Department of Community Affairs in Tallahassee? No. However, what the Colliers are trying to do is a deal in Washington D.C, and,

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again, bypass the South Florida Community entirely, but let's change the topic now to golf.

The Collier plan is proposing two new golf courses, and as we've discussed before, we have a Keys Gate Golf Course that's barely used, and an adjoining Redlands Golf Course that's, again, barely used. Has there ever been a study showing that we absolutely and desperately need another golf course in the Homestead Community? No.

Where is our plan that integrates the plant activities around the golf course with a military base? There's no plan that integrates both.

But absolutely what mystifies me about this entire process is how this community and its primary source of written media, the Miami Herald, has shut its eyes on the Collier's tactics to win military bases instead of the communities that deserve them the most. But this hasn't happened in all communities. It didn't happen in Orlando, and the Orlando Sentinel stood behind its community. In fact, the Orlando Sentinel went to the heart of the Collier's threat, exposed the truth of the Collier's negotiation with the government without the city's input at all.

Once this was known by the city, the city, the newspaper and the community as a whole came together and stopped this process entirely. In fact, the Orlando Sentinel published the concerns addressed by the major conservatory, calling their mineral rights worthless and challenging them, asking them for real land from the Colliers, if they were going to swap.

In conclusion, we as a community should act like Orlando and capture this golden opportunity to take a land that belongs to the people of Miami-Dade County.

COLONEL McSHANE: Mario J. Garcia-Serra followed by Karen Salas.

000344 MARIO GARCIA-SERRA: Good evening, Colonel, I just want to indicate in the little time I have to putting two rumors to rest. The first rumor is that there was some sort of political deal that went around this contract. Now that's just not true. Because when this contract was awarded, it was awarded, but it was awarded because nobody else was willing to put their money on it to help the people of South Dade right after Hurricane Andrew.

If there has been any political deal made, it's been going on right now, at the last

minute, where somebody is trying to hijack the process with money in Washington.

Secondly, for those of you who believe the situation is not that bad in South Dade, I highly recommend that they drive down to South Dade, and see the 15 percent unemployment and see the 30 percent poverty rate on their way driving down Key Largo.

Lastly, the good people of South Dade need jobs, and by good jobs I don't mean hotel maids or golf guys.

Thank you very much.

000361 KAREN SALAS: Hi. My name is Karen Salas. Like Felix I also did some research and came across some articles, one which particularly interested me, so I wanted to read it out loud. Actually, I wanted to read part of it out loud.

This article is published in the Orlando Sentinel back when the Colliers were trying to swamp lands for the Orlando Naval Base.

"The Interior Secretary's Former Right-hand Man is Now Working for a Florida Family that Wants the Orlando Naval Base." This article was published May, 19, 1996 and was written by Sean Halton of the Washington Bureau.

The article reads:

"Florida's wealthy Collier family bought a direct line from the interior secretary Bruce Babbitt as part of the family's bid to take over five military bases in Orlando at the federal government.

"The family has used Babbitt's former right-hand man as a lobbyist to help the Interior Department with a lucrative land swap involving the Orlando Naval Training Center and four soon to be closed bases on prime California land.

"That strong behind the scenes political connection may help explain why top material officials remain open to the Collier image, even as lower levels, federal and state officials question it's environmental urgency and suggest it may not be in the U.S. taxpayers best interest. Rodney Boone (phonetic) is a prominent lobbyist who was Babbitt's chief of staff in the days of Arizona governor and is still confirmed last week that he works for the Colliers."

The Miami Herald makes me wonder where their investigate team has been. This is clearly an important decision that will affect the lives for many years to come. So I urge the Air Force Base to

investigate this further in coming to a final decision.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Richard Groh.

000345 RICHARD GROH: Hello, ladies and gentlemen, and the panel here. My name is Richard Groh, been a resident of Dade County all my life, 38 years. Born and raised here. And I'm a member of South Dade County since 1980. I have a tape I would like to show you here of the typical business activity that's here in South Dade at this time.

(Thereupon, a tape was played.)

RICHARD GROH: Well, folks, as you can see, this is the grim reality of the situation in South Dade. For some of you that don't live here, it's hard for you to realize. I wish more business owners were here to speak for themselves, speak up for themselves, a lot of them have given up.

You've seen them, they've closed their businesses. People have their businesses here all their lives, many businesses have been here 20, 25 years, they've had to close, there's no jobs, very little jobs, very little to look forward to, from many business owners and landowners in South Dade.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: I realize that I pulled Richard Groh's card out, I thought he was the same individual who spoken the other day, so I put him way at the back when he should have talked a long time ago. And I just called Donald Groh's name and since your brother used about five minutes, I'll give you another minute if you would like to do that at this point.

000346 DONALD GROH: Okay. My name is Donald Groh and my brother. As I was making this tape, I've had to edit so much out of it to bring it down to a little over three minutes. My wife said to me, this is so sad, I can't believe how sad it is, and I started crying.

I'm a landlord, I've got to go and collect rents from these people in order to pay our mortgages. The grim reality is they don't make money. None of the businesses are making any money, and the worst feeling in the world is going to them and serving them their eviction notices, and I just wanted to say we need our help, we need help from everybody to try to turn this situation around and we hope you make the best decision for the economy in South Dade.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Ana Palma, on deck Bill McHugh.

000347 ANA PALMA: Hello, my name is Ana Palma. I love the Everglades too, but I love my children, and I don't want my children to have to be going out looking for jobs elsewhere. I want jobs here for them. I think there is a way and I think the airport can be built and be environmentally safe.

Thank you.

000348 BILL McHUGH: I wanted to thank the Air Force and the FAA for holding these hearings to get the opportunity to get public views of what's going on, particularly on your draft SEIS.

I'm Bill McHugh, I'm an airport consultant. I have been here for the last two days in support of the conveyance of Homestead Air Force Base to Dade County for the development of the commercial airport.

The lead EIS has evaluated Dade County's proposed plan for this use and has found that it will produce positive job opportunities and economic growth to the Homestead area. This EIS also found that the commercial airport use will help solve the projected growth and aviation demands in the Miami area in the next few years. This will not change in

use the land on which it was established, because that land was established as an airport some 60 odd years ago, the EIS did not find any unacceptable environmental reason to prohibit a commercial airport reuse of this facility.

I have heard many opinions on this commercial airport use would be unacceptable for this property. Many of the reasons that I heard and the information that was put forth was available to the Air Force and the FAA as they prepared the SEIS, and still, the commercial airport plan produced more benefits than the other proposed uses. Until a compelling case can be made against the commercial airport plan, I still stand in support of that plan.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Mercedes Sellek.

000349 MERCEDES SELLEK: Good evening, Colonel, panel members. This evening I'm here in a capacity, it's a little bit different than my last few presentations to the panel.

This evening I am here to speak for president of the senate of the State of Florida, Tom Jennings, and speaker of the house representative Mr. John Thrasher. Senitor Jennings and John

Thrasher drafted a letter to Vice President Al Gore and asked to be read into the record, and I'll be glad to provide you a copy. The original was sent to Mr. Gore.

"Dear Vice President:

This letter is in support of the proposal of Miami-Dade County to convert Homestead Air Force Base into a new commercial airport.

As you're aware, Miami Dade's proposal has been the subject of comprehensive research. That research supports the expeditious adoption of this proposal.

The most significant aspect of the development of the commercial airport is the economic opportunity that it will provide South Dade. Infrastructure development can encourage and strengthen long term economic growth. The recent estimates suggest that the development of the commercial airport at completion would directly result in the creation of over 17,000 jobs. Additionally, it is projected that over 20,000 on-site jobs would sustain a commercial airport. Overall, the commercial airport will provide a stable economic base for South Dade.

While economic growth is paramount, it

is also necessary to analyze the environmental effects of the proposed development. Over the last six years several reports have been produced regarding the disposal of Homestead Air Force Base. Last December the most comprehensive report, the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement was released. Several findings in that report should be noted.

The draft SEIS found that overall the development would have negligible or minimal environmental impacts. It is actually projected that the mandatory implementation of the Service Water Management master plan, the freshwater discharges into Biscayne Bay will decrease 28 percent by 2015.

Noise impacts on both national parks and in the local communities are so small that a noise management mitigation plan will not be required.

Given the fact that Miami-Dade County will require additional commercial airport capacity, the proposal to develop Homestead Air Force Base offers the County an environmentally responsible way to meet that need and provide economic growth for South Dade.

It is our hope that the federal

government will in the most expeditious way adopt this plan.

Very Truly,

Tom Jennings, Senitor. John Thrasher, Speaker of the House.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. Art Fernandez followed by William Riley.

000350 ART FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Committee. You know, I had the pleasure of speaking in front of you on Monday night as a labor leader and represented 2,000 people. Tonight, I would like to speak to you as a taxpayer of Dade County.

And I wanted to say something, Colonel. I've had clearances for 18 years to work on almost every type of missile site, I mean every type of missile, and I don't know how many missile sites throughout the country and even parts of Canada, almost on the Canadian border. And I get tired of hearing you have to make a tough decision.

Let me say this to you, Monday night I heard Representative Candas said either you pay now or you pay later. And I know that the people were right and I know they can shut down a lot of things, a lot of military bases, but like Representative Candas says, you either pay now or later. Because

you got either two choices, you either turn over to Dade County, or you close it. So what do they want to do?

If you close the Air Force Base, it relates back to Dade County, and no telling what they're going to do. So let's leave it as an airport. Let's revitalize Homestead Air Force Base. Let's turn it back to Dade County and then have the one that puts the money up, get it developed, and I support it 100 percent.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: William Riley. On deck Jose Romero.

000351 WILLIAM RILEY: William Riley, International Brotherhood of Workers. I had the pleasure of speaking to you on Monday night down in South Dade and the same things apply. I mean, you've heard it from a lot of people, you know that in the year 2015 we're going to be out of air space. There's no other place to build the facility. There's no viable site that you could find 1600 acres or 1700 acres.

You've heard the majority of elected officials in the County state that they are in favor of this that represent millions of people in

Florida, and in Dade County hundreds of thousands of people, and there's just no reason to hold this up any longer.

We would appreciate if you all would support the airport, because the people of Homestead and the people making a living building things, we need it, we need it really badly. So we would appreciate your support.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Jose Romero.

000352 JOSE ROMERO: Good evening. My name is Jose Romero. I live in Homestead. I have been living in Dade County for 35 years. I own a small business in Homestead. For the last 20 years I have been there. Lately, after Andrew, we are going through a hard time. We need 38,000 jobs. We need to do this as soon as possible.

In Homestead we saw the movie, but there's more shopping centers, like the one you saw in the movie. There's one shopping center around my house, out of the 18 businesses was there, there's only two left. This wasn't on the movie. There's a lot of other things.

In our community we had an election like three months ago, we elected our mayor. If all them

there was for this development, they all voted in favor of the airport, transfer to a be a commercial.

We should also in Dade County, the major and most of the commissions are in favor of this airport being built, the commercial. It's very important to say that the racetrack - they put a racetrack in Homestead, that only provide jobs for eight or ten days a year.

Also, the baseball that we have in Homestead is empty. Why it's empty? Because nobody wants to play baseball there because the community is very bad, there's no money. So who wants to be put baseball there? Before Andrew they were planning to put a baseball team. After Andrew they wouldn't put a baseball team. We waited seven years. We haven't done anything.

It's about time we get it going and get something resolved. Do this commercial airport as soon as possible and, you know, it's very sad to waste every year. What, are we going to have a ghost town in Homestead? We need it badly. It's enough time. Thank you, and have a nice day.

COLONEL McSHANE: Thank you. That was the last card. I'm not going to go through the cards of names I called earlier. People who didn't

respond, if there's anyone here who has not had a chance to speak and now desires to do so, this is your opportunity.

000353 LUIS CASAS: My name is Luis Casas. Nothing can be better for Homestead City and nothing can happen better for Homestead City for the city or for Homestead citizens than bring in the commercial airport.

Miami with the Miami International Airport as any person can see Miami International Airport that is a clean city and clean airport. If you breathe air there deep, the only thing you get is fresh air in the airport, in Miami and Fort Lauderdale, too. So the best thing for Homestead City is bring the airport to commercial.

Thank you.

COLONEL McSHANE: Your name?

000354 JORGE MERIDA: Good evening. Jorge Merida. I live in Dade County. I've been living here for the past 30 years. I just want to thank you for your time. And I read somewhere In God we Trust and I want to change that to, In the Air Force We Trust. I hope we bring the airport to Homestead.

COLONEL McSHANE: Okay. Anybody else? I don't see any.

I want to thank you folks very much for your comments and for participating in the public hearing, especially those of you who showed up so many times this week.

Your comments will be extremely helpful to the Air Force and other agencies in preparing the final SEIS.

As we close here, I do want to remind you that if you didn't comment tonight or if you did comment and decide that you have more to say on this issue, you may write your comments down. You can either leave them here with the staff today in the box on the comment table or you can mail them in later. Just make sure they are mailed no later than March 7th so we can address them in the final SEIS.

Once again, I want to thank you for attending these public hearings. The Air Force appreciates you sharing your ideas and time.

(Thereupon, the hearing concluded at approximately 11:30 p.m.)

CERTIFICATE

STATE OF FLORIDA)
) SS:
COUNTY OF DADE)

I, MARIANA C. CONVERY, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages 1 to and including 175, is a true and correct transcription of my stenographic notes of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to the best of my ability, taken at 5901 S.W. 8th Street, City of Miami, County of Dade, State of Florida, on the 3rd day of February, 2000.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto affixed my hand this 22nd day of February, 2000.

MARIANA C. CONVERY, Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public, State of Florida at Large.

MARIANA C. CONVERY
My Comm Exp. 8/30/2003
No. CC 947963
[ ] Personally Known [ ] Other I.D.