[ms-0398.030.014.012]

CHAIRMAN:
Banking, Finance and Public Indebtedness
COMMITTEES:
Insurance
Utilities and Commerce
Water, Parks and Wildlife
MEMBER:
Commission of the Californias

# Assembly
# California Legislature

STEVE PEACE
ASSEMBLYMAN

June 28, 1993

RECEIVED
JUN 29 1993
Ans'd. JM

The Honorable Brian Bilbray
County Board of Supervisors
District 1
1600 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear ~~Supervisor Bilbray~~ Brian:

With both State budget deliberations and the Federal Base Closure Commission work completed, it is time for the County to act upon my request that the airport issue be put before the voters in November.

As you know, the Governor has called a November election. On the ballot will be the extension of a half-cent sales tax for local government and so-called school voucher initiative. This State sponsored election will allow county voters the opportunity to express their opinion on the important airport issue without the cost impact normally associated with such an election.

The South Bay has suffered tremendously as a result of an extraordinary lack of leadership in the City of San Diego. I have come to the conclusion that the special interest pressure on City Hall to pursue the Otay Mesa site is simply too great for us to expect any change in the stall tactics still being employed by the Council majority.

Bad as this has been for workers and businesses in the South Bay, if we do not act now it will be a disaster for our entire region. Now that the Federal government has determined to shut down portions of NTC, it is imperative that the Port District be allowed to pursue the expansion of Lindbergh Field to meet San Diego's known needs for the near future.

We must do now what the City majority should have done long ago. We must work with the navy to accommodate continuing NTC operation while making strategically located property available for airport expansion. We must take advantage of the potential availability of the General Dynamics/Hughes property on the eastern periphery of the airport to construct modern and easily accessible terminals. We should work with Mexican officials to link Rodriguez with Lindbergh by rail. We should work with other Southern California airport planners to establish rail links to LAX and other Southern California facilities (San Diego is currently the only Southern California county not participating in this planning). These plans

☐ State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, California 94249-0001
Telephone: (916) 445-7556
FAX 916-322-2271

☐ 430 Davidson Street - Suite B
Chula Vista, California 91910
Telephone: (916) 426-1617
FAX 619-696-5430

☐ 1101 Airport Road - Suite C
Imperial, California 92251
Telephone: (619) 352-3101
FAX 619-355-4831

Printed on Recycled Paper

could include the construction of a remote terminal at Miramar linked by rail and serving Lindbergh and Rodriguez.

Finally, our most critical focus must be to improve upon San Diego's greatest natural asset--its deep water port. The only way in which San Diego can possibly benefit from increased trade between the U.S. and Mexico is by improving the cargo capacity of our port and by establishing legitimate rail linkage to the south, the east and the north.

None of this will happen until the City Hall majority stops beating the deadhorse idea of an Otay Mesa airport. It would appear that this will only happen when the people of San Diego have an opportunity to make their voices heard over the powerful special interests who continue to pull strings behind the scene to keep the border airport boondoggle alive.

I have enclosed a copy of a recent county-wide poll concerning voters feelings about San Diego's airport needs. As you can see, San Diegans are very divided over every airport issue, except one-voters in every sector of San Diego overwhelmingly oppose the construction of an airport near the border with Mexico.

I know that this comes as no surprise to you. You have tried to reason with our good friends at City Hall. However, until elected officials in the City of San Diego see their own constituents express their opinions directly, I do not believe that any amount of reasoning will change the more than twenty years of gridlock which has ruled City Hall on airport questions.

Failure to put this measure on the ballot could cause our community to miss out on the fantastic economic opportunities now before us. But worse, the special interest pressure could lead the San Diego Council majority toward an airport "solution" not supported by the community. This would send San Diego into a spiral of lawsuits, recall elections and political instability leaving our community wounded and divided at a time when the focus and attention of our political and economic leadership is critical to San Diego's ability to transition into a new economic environment.

Brian, this is as important as it gets.

Sincerely,

STEVE PEACE

Enclosures

## SUMMARY

## VOTER ATTITUDES REGARDING AIRPORT OPTIONS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Methodology

The survey was conducted by telephone over two weeks and directed to 675 "likely to vote" voters generated randomly from voter registration data. Telephone calls were made on successive Monday through Thursday evenings of week one and Monday through Wednesday evening of week two.

All questions were rotated where appropriate to assure statistical neutrality relative to positioning. The county was divided into six regions for data analysis. The margin of error for the County as a whole is plus or minus two percent. The margin of error for the data by region is plus or minus five percent.

Questions

Four questions concerning airport options were asked of all voters. The first question concerned the voter's perception of the need for a new international airport without regard to location. All voters were then asked in rotation their opinion of three specific locations assuming that an international airport were needed.

Results

| | **YES** | **NO** | **UNDECIDED** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Do you feel that we need an international airport? | 54% | 45% | 1 % |
| ... **would you support** ... locating an international airport at the Miramar Naval Air Station site? | 53.8% | 45.5% | 0.7% |
| ... keeping the existing Lindbergh Field site and expand? | 47.5% | 52.5% | 0% |
| ... building an international airport at Otay Mesa near the Tijuana Border? | 33.1% | 66.2% | 0.7% |

Analysis

The most striking result is the essential nonexistence of voters without an opinion. This is very unusual even in the selected pool of high propensity voters used for this survey. The electorate is also very polarized in their opinions except on the Otay Mesa option for which their was broad opposition.

A sub-sample of respondents, selected at random, was re-called and asked to measure the strength of their support or opposition to each proposal. They were asked whether they considered their opinions to be **extremely firm, firm, somewhat firm, not very firm,** or **not firm at all**. Within the sub-sample, respondents were unusually firm about their opinions as would be expected from a group which produced almost no undecideds. In general, opponents to proposals were more likely to describe their positions as **extremely firm** or **firm** then were supporters of proposals.

Other questions, not dealing with the airport issue, such as voters' opinions of various elected officials, produced "undecided" responses consistent with expectations. It would appear that voters feel that they have an unusually high degree of information concerning airport issues and have consequently already formed very strong opinions.

It also should be remembered that the questions were structured in such a way as to give the highest possible opportunity for respondents to pick a positive alternative from the three options. Given that almost one half of the electorate opposes **any new international airport**, it is possible that the actual level of support for any of the three alternatives may be lower than these numbers indicate.

Not surprisingly, Lindbergh was the most popular choice of those who felt that San Diego had no need for an international airport. Among those who did feel that San Diego needed a new airport, Miramar was the clear favorite.

**Preferences of those who answered YES to Question 1**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Miramar | 60% Yes | 40% No |
| Lindbergh | 42.5% Yes | 57.5% No |
| Border | 43% Yes | 57% No |

**Likely voter preferences head to head**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lind. vs. Miramar | Lindbergh 56.8% | Miramar 32.4% | Undecided 10.8% |
| Lind. vs. Border | Lindbergh 70.2% | Border 24.2% | Undecided 5.6% |
| Miramar vs. Border | Miramar 32.4% | Border 21.6% | Undecided 46.0% |

The only likely election battle would be between two alternatives other than maintenance of the Lindbergh site. This is because the combination of voters who believe that San Diego does not need a new international airport and those who believe that Lindbergh should be expanded produces a high undecided only for options excluding Lindbergh. Any proposal competing against Lindbergh would have to prove itself on two fronts. Voters would have to be convinced that Lindbergh could not meet future needs <u>and</u> that the proposed site <u>would</u> meet such needs.

Finally, the survey produced remarkably little variation by geography. For example, the strongest opposition to the border proposal was in the northern portion of the county followed by the southern portion. However, all areas of the county opposed the Border option by more than 60%. Voters residing in the beach communities of the City of San Diego were less likely to believe that San Diego needed a new airport and more likely to support retention of Lindbergh Field than voters as a whole. However, they also supported Miramar by a slightly wider margin than they did Lindbergh.

Conclusion

Voter attitudes on the airport questions were far more polarized than on other questions on the survey. Moreover, when told that certain groups or public figures supported proposals which the voter opposed , voters were more likely to change their opinion of the endorser than their position on the proposal.

Moving voter opinion is never impossible. However, this survey would indicate that anything short of an extraordinarily intensive campaign would have very little affect on voter opinion.