

Palomar Airport: Why does the FAA Reward Bad Behavior?, 251

Throwing FAA grant money away

By Raymond Bender Aug 4, 2019 1:26 pm ET | Updated Aug 5, 2019 12:42 am ET

After Boeing's 737 Max aircraft suffered two fatal crashes, the newspaper USA Today quoted the FAA as saying: "*We don't allow companies to police themselves.*" [see multiple USA Today articles at USAtoday.com and search "FAA, Boeing Max"]

Really?

The McClellan-Palomar Federal Aviation Administration Grant Assurances

Since 1958, the FAA has given the County of San Diego beau coup bucks to build and grow McClellan-Palomar Airport (Palomar) in the city of Carlsbad. The standard FAA Grant Assurances command the county to be good.

At least 15 different times, county said in writing: *I will not use Palomar Airport property:*

- *For non-airport uses;*
- *For uses interfering with airport operations;*
- *For hazardous uses; or*
- *For uses interfering with airport development.*

The County's Past Bad Behavior

Yet daily for 14 years, county dumped about 1 million cubic yards of trash in Palomar canyons creating about 31 acres of garbage landfills near the Palomar runway – a non-airport use.

The result. The landfills attracted flocks of birds near the runway threatening bird strikes. A use interfering with airport operations.

The landfills contained hundreds of thousands of batteries, plastics, and other deteriorating harmful substances creating harmful garbage juice leaching down through the landfill, which county for

inexplicable reasons, chose not to line with a 3-foot clay bottom line to protect clean land and waters below.

And what do landfills do? The rotting garbage creates potentially dangerous methane gas. As county found out in the mid 2000s when the Palomar landfills had underground fires. Excuse me. County calls these "oxidation events."

And what use do the FAA and county put the Palomar east end landfill to? What a perfect place for the so-called FAA-required unpaved Runway Safety Area – the place where aircraft landing short of the runway might crash. A landfill with plastic methane gas collection piping a few feet below the surface. No hazard risk that.

BTW. How do you know where the Palomar landfills are? At the corner of El Camino Real and Palomar Airport Road, just drive past the ugly, weed strewn landfill perimeter that fouls the county-avoided, Carlsbad city-code-required Scenic Corridor.

The County's Future Bad Behavior

Now what would a reasonable person do with a really big but sort-of-contained mound of rotting, methane-emitting, garbage juice draining landfill?

County's 2018 Palomar Master Plan says: Let's drill hundreds of very deep holes all the way through the land fill, each hole about 12 to 24 inches in diameter, so we can extend the runway over pilings and make an aircraft crash into the remaining runway-landfill area even more likely.

The FAA: Rewarding Bad Behavior

What again was it that the FAA said? The FAA does not allow companies to police themselves?

Was it really that hard for the FAA to see garbage trucks lined up for 14 years at the Palomar landfills and flocks of bird circling the Palomar runway? And what did your Carlsbad council members do to protect you?

And what can you do? Go to the Citizens for a Friendly Airport (C4fa) webpage [C4fa.org]. Help your neighbors fight the county, Carlsbad, and FAA plan to expand Palomar and further degrade the quality of your life.