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Dear Ms Smith

I was pleased to read in the local press that you have arranged for a Public Consultation process before making any decision on a Public Inquiry re the operational hours/ expansion plans (which are fervently denied by management at BCA) of Belfast City Airport. I would like to bring to your attention the fact that I, along with a couple of other concerned residents of the area, about 3 years ago did submit some 1200 (possibly more) signatures to the Planning Office Headquarters, Clarence Court, calling for a Public Inquiry with regards to the possible changes to the operational hours and usage of the airport.

Whilst I realize that times change and perhaps you may feel that these signatures may no longer be relevant to the ongoing processes at BCA, I feel I must emphasize those 1200 local residents who live with the airport and its current foibles will definitely be of the same mindset as they were a few years back. If not more so with the recent "late night flights" which have been occurring on a more and more regular basis. I did at one time ask the Planning Office if there was a precedent on the amount of figures collected before a Public Inquiry was agreed upon only to be told "No, you could have one person complain about something and it would really just depend who the person was dealing with it to make the decision as to whether or not a Public Inquiry would be held." I think this approach on a matter so sensitive is very blasé and totally disregards the views of the people affected by these issues.

It also seems that the existing situation is loose and unchecked. Frequent breaches of late night restrictions occur with no penalty or sanction on BCA. Their disregard for the existing Planning Agreement is plain for all to see. The Planning Agreement, weak though it is, should not be changed to allow for any lifting of the passenger cap. If that were to happen the noise issues and associated safety concerns would be intolerable. You will decide the best approach to adopt once the consultation exercise is concluded. One option is a Public Inquiry and in the interests of openness and transparency there seems to me to be no impediment or barrier to adopting this course so that all the issues can be debated fully.

I have had the ongoing support of Sir Reg Empey, who has been actively working on behalf of his constituents and advised me of your current decision. I have also called for support from all sections of our community and have found, with the exception of one or two local councillors who felt my action was unfair and unjust, (although it has to be said that neither of these two particular people live in the surrounding areas adjacent to the

airport and would therefore possibly not appreciate fully the further disruption for residents should the airports current regulations be amended), and one of whom also sits on the Airport Forum (which at the last check had no-one from the immediate area on the Forum – I would have thought this was for the making of a very biased Forum, after all how can they put forward the residents fears and queries fairly if they are not actually affected by those same said issues).

Sinn Fein's Joe O'Donnell and Dr Ian Adamson were fully supportive of my actions in calling for a Public Inquiry as were numerous other Community organizations that are affected by the Belfast City Airport. I feel I must make it very clear that I am not working to a hidden agenda as Mr. Doran, who I know is no longer at BCA possibly felt and did indeed state in a letter to Mr. Peter Robinson (who had written to the Airport Management on my behalf). I have no objection to Belfast City Airport and am aware that it does indeed bring some welcome revenue and jobs to the locality but we need to ask the question "At What Cost?"

I am therefore taking this opportunity to ask you to consider the feelings and the safety of the local residents, including all the children who attend the schools in the locality of BCA, of which I think there are about 39 and if each school has an average of 300 pupils (at least) amounts to 117,000 children (not including those in nursery education), and who, in the event of any disaster will be at serious risk of injury or possibly worse, then you have no option but to please find in our favour and allow a Public Inquiry to take place. This is the only fair way forward which will allow the residents to have some peace of mind and be safe in the knowledge that at least there was someone there who was willing to listen and accept their fears and treat them with some compassion and sympathy and not put business first over health & safety.

I would lastly like to draw your attention to the remark made by Luis Sanchez-Salmeron in the News Letter on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2004 where he was quoted as saying "We have been trying to change things bit by bit" and "the prospect of having easyJet or Ryanair is attractive, but only when the time is right". Can you ask Mr Sanchez-Salmeron to clarify exactly what he means by these remarks? Surely he could not be implying that they have been bending the rules slightly but not enough to cause concern and when we are least expecting it, move the goal posts altogether, so please do not score an own goal here, stand up and represent the people of the area and allow us to have our say by the fairest means possible, by the granting of a full Public Inquiry.

I await your views and look forward to hearing the outcome of your Public Consultation.