

## **Candidates Answer Key Questions on O'Hare Issues**

**On August 25, 2010, in letters from City Manager Jim Hock to Gov. Quinn, Sen. Brady, Rep. Mulligan, Rep. Schakowsky, Mr. Alexi Giannoulis, Ms. Wendy Gruen, Mr. LeAllan Jones, Mr. Mark Kirk, Mr. Joel Pollak, and Mr. Rich Whitney, the O'Hare Airport Commission posed the six questions listed below. As they are received, candidate responses will be incorporated.**

- I. What is your position regarding big airport growth and development projects and the need for expansion of existing airports and should a cap be placed on the size of an individual airport when that airport is “land-locked”, literally surrounded by long-standing residential communities?**

### **Rich Whitney - Green Party candidate for Governor:**

*“I oppose big airport growth and development generally, in addition to the more specific reasons why I oppose expansion of O'Hare. We are at the end of the era of cheap oil and we are well into the developing catastrophe known as global warming or climate change. Both of these crises demand fast and decisive action by our government, and both affect the future of air travel.*

*Air travel is a major generator of greenhouse gas emissions, especially when measured per passenger mile. It is responsible for about 10 percent of the total in the U.S. We should, and hopefully soon will, begin to require airlines to pay greenhouse gas taxes or fees to reflect the true social cost*

*of this form of transportation. This will be reflected in higher ticket prices – as it should. Flying needs to become an increasingly restrictive privilege, not a highly subsidized, artificially cheap mode of travel, as it is now.*

*It is also not very energy efficient per passenger mile. As the price of petroleum products, including jet fuel, goes up – as it must, from here on out – economic factors will also diminish the affordability and attractiveness of air travel.*

*Under these circumstances, it is foolish for society to be expending financial resources and sacrificing communities, compromising environmental safety and quality of life, in order to expand the capacity for a mode of transportation that will – and must – soon reach its peak, and go into decline. Even if new flying technologies are developed, such as battery powered propeller planes, those are decades away, and even then, the frequency of air travel is unlikely to return to its current high point.*

*We as a society must quickly make a major commitment to, and investment in, high speed rail as a much more energy efficient and environmentally friendly alternative to air travel. We should also promote other forms of sustainable transportation. But meanwhile, for both environmental and economic reasons, we must put a halt to further airport expansion. For more on my views on sustainable transportation, I invite readers to visit my website at [www.whitneyforgov.org](http://www.whitneyforgov.org).*

*These are the principal reasons why I am the only candidate in the race who opposes both the proposed Peotone Airport and any further expansion of O’Hare. If I am elected governor, such projects will face only opposition from my office. Any short-term expansion needs should be met by expanding capacity at the Gary/Chicago International Airport, not harming communities in either the Chicago suburbs or Peotone.*

*I also agree that a cap should be placed on any airport that is land-locked by established residential communities. The communities were established first. Municipalities should have an absolute right to block any airport expansion.”*

**2. Do you believe a Regional Airport Authority should be created for the Chicagoland area and, if so, how would you go about creating one?**

**Rich Whitney - Green Party candidate for Governor:**

*“To be honest, I haven’t really seen or heard the arguments pro or con for establishing a Regional Airport Authority for the greater Chicago area, and do not immediately see a role for State government in establishing one. However, I am open to hearing the case for creating one, as well as the arguments against.”*

**3. What do you think of the current petition before the EPA, identifying a cap on jet aircraft emissions?**

**Rich Whitney - Green Party candidate for Governor:**

*“I support a cap on jet aircraft emissions, as an essential part of broader and more stringent controls on greenhouse gas and other harmful emissions.”*

**4. Should there be an improvement in the federally mandated standard of <65 dB DNL to lower the threshold or move to SENEL in evaluating acceptable noise standards from jet aircraft? If so, how would you go about changing this standard?**

**Rich Whitney - Green Party candidate for Governor:**

*“Yes. I would favor a bill to establish and enforce noise pollution levels based on Single Event Noise Exposure Levels. This should supplement, not replace the 65 db DNL standard. In other words, communities should not be subjected to either an average daily noise level that is disturbing nor single events that are potentially harmful to hearing and health. I’m not sure where to draw the line on a SENEL standard. I know that noises higher than 80 db have some potential to cause harm but that is for a protracted period. However, even single events at the 65 db level can cause quality of life*

*concerns, and arguably the SENEL standard should be set there. At a minimum, I would want to receive some public input and expert testimony in drawing up a new standard based on SENEL.”*

**5. Should O’Hare expansion continue forward given current and evolving information indicating serious consequences to health and the environment and what steps, if any, would you take for course correction?**

**Rich Whitney - Green Party candidate for Governor:**

*“O’Hare expansion should not continue forward. I would look to establish and impose tougher air pollution exposure limits, greenhouse gas fees and tougher noise abatement regulations to impede and hopefully halt such expansion.”*

**6. What changes should be made in the EIS process supporting airport growth and development projects and would you support approval of IL GA HB322 for an interim supplemental EIS?**

**Rich Whitney - Green Party candidate for Governor:**

*“The prior EIS was based on modeling that experience has already proved to be grossly inaccurate in terms of actual exposure to pollution and noise. It also did not include exposure to jet aircraft pollution, a major flaw to say the least. A new EIS is needed based on the actual levels of exposure. I not only support HB 322; I will fight for its passage”*