

October 31, 2007

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the 200,000 people in the rapidly growing Arlington Planning District – and representing the area’s elected leadership during the last quarter century – we are writing to voice our united opposition to Jacksonville Aviation Authority’s proposal to lengthen the runway at Craig Municipal Airport.

Since the late 1970s, each of us has tried to work with the Authority to foster communications and good relations between Craig Airport and the residents who live, work and play in its surrounding communities.

Unfortunately, these efforts have been hampered by a pattern of deception and broken promises from JAA. Their proposed 2010 Comprehensive Plan amendment is only the latest example of JAA’s bullying approach to community relations.

In 2001, JAA and the City of Jacksonville accepted the Planning Department’s recommendation and made written pledges to the community that Craig’s runway would never be lengthened. Between 2000 and 2006, 23,485 people moved into the area with the understanding that the Craig Community Covenant was a contract. More than 12,000 homes were built around Craig Field during those years with no comment from JAA.

Now, JAA says that the promise was a mistake. The Authority wants the City Council to absolve it of the commitments made.

We urge city leaders to force JAA to keep its promise to our community.

Citizens have a right to expect their government to stand behind its word, regardless of how profitable the alternative may appear.

Sincerely,

Clay Yarborough, City Council, District 1
Bill Bishop, City Council, District 2
Lynette Self, Former City Councilmember, District 2
John Crescimbeni, Former City Councilmember, District 1
Jim Tullis, Former City Councilmember, District 2
Aubrey Daniel, Former City Councilmember, District 1
Terry Wood, Former City Councilmember, District 1