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Irked by low-flying cargo planes, an El Dorado County supervisor has fired off a sharply worded letter to Sacramento County environmental officials regarding the draft master plan for Mather Airport.

The guided missive from District 4 Supervisor Ron Briggs was sent Wednesday. Friday is the deadline for comments about the scope of the environmental impact study that must accompany the Mather master plan. Jet cargo aircraft noise and air pollution from the big planes must be addressed in that environmental impact document, according to Briggs.

"The other night I counted planes instead of sheep," Briggs said today during a telephone interview.

Briggs said he lives in Gold Hill, between Placerville and Coloma. Jet cargo overflights have not been an issue in that area until recently but now they are coming over with increasing frequency, he said.

Briggs is placing the Mather Airport issue on the agenda for his board's Dec. 11 meeting. He will ask for a resolution supporting the city of Folsom's lawsuit to halt any expansion of Mather Airport until the environmental impact analysis is complete.

Folsom officials filed that action requesting a writ of mandate last week.

The letter from Briggs to the Sacramento County DERA includes the statement:

"Simply said, El Dorado County doesn't want to become the trash receptacle for Sacramento's Mather Airport aircraft noise and air pollution."

The issue has become a hot topic in Folsom and El Dorado County.

The Folsom lawsuit requests a temporary restraining order to halt the county's implementation of its new lease amendment with Midwest Development Co. and its sub-tenant, DHL Express, said Kerry Miller, Folsom city manager, said last week.

The Board of Supervisors on Oct. 23 approved that agreement on a 4-1 vote, with Supervisor Roberta MacGlashan dissenting.

Sacramento County environmental officials have not finished a report assessing the environmental impacts of a proposed Mather Airport master plan.

The board's approval also came just a few days after a county environmental assessment official took heat from area residents about Mather cargo jet operations. That confrontation occurred during an Oct. 18 community meeting in Folsom. Sacramento County officials appealed for patience and promised the angry residents that the master plan environmental impact assessment will not be a sham.

The draft master plan envisions possibly dramatic increases in Mather Airport cargo operations.

Miller said last week that for many residents, those overflights are already too low, too loud and too frequent, especially between midnight and 6 a.m.

The recently approved lease amendment would expand the DHL Mather facility by more than 35,000

square feet of paved area. It would include expanded parking for employees and for big-rig trucks and new storage areas for ground support equipment, according to the city's evaluation.

Folsom officials are upset because all those DHL improvements are discussed in the draft master plan now supposedly being evaluated.

The Sacramento County counsel declined to comment about the lawsuit.

On Nov. 8, the board of directors of the El Dorado Hills Community Services District adopted a resolution urging Sacramento County to include El Dorado Hills and the surrounding area in the environmental review for the proposed Mather master plan.

That resolution states that expanded Mather cargo operations could result in up to 50 low-altitude cargo flights a day, "predominantly between the hours of 3 a.m. to 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 8 p.m."

Potential impacts cited by El Dorado Hills officials include "increased obtrusive noise, light and unhealthy air pollutions and an increased probability of a major catastrophic aircraft crash" resulting in "the socioeconomic decline of the individual citizen's residential and business property values."

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