

Board of County Commissioners

Doug Howard, *President*
Richard S. Rothschild, *Vice President*
David H. Roush, *Secretary*
Robin Bartlett Frazier
Haven N. Shoemaker, Jr.



Carroll County Government

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMMISSIONERS VOTE TO HALT AIRPORT EXPANSION

Thursday, January 26, 2012 – The Board of County Commissioners voted 3 to 2 to halt expansion of the Carroll County Regional Airport and to instruct staff to start the process of revising the airport's master plan. The idea of possible expansion began in November 2004 with the Technical Advisory Committee's first meeting. Since that time there have been numerous public meetings, forums, and open sessions during which the pros and cons of expansion have been discussed. The prior Board of Commissioners made the decision to expand the airport, but, because of concerns over that decision, the current Board of Commissioners decided to devote additional time to studying the proposal.

The Board of Commissioners delved deeply into this subject over the last 13 months. They have held a large forum in May of 2010 and several additional public meetings designed to obtain information and explore all aspects of this project. In September, the Commissioners believed they still needed more information so they created a 2-member Task Force to study the issue in more depth. The Task Force made its report to the Board on January 19th.

Commissioner Howard stated that regardless of the results of the vote, the process this Board of Commissioners has engaged in to arrive at this decision was thorough, public and open.

Commissioner Frazier said "we are still recovering from the first airport expansion in the 1990's with over \$2 million in debt from the corporate hangar debacle and even more importantly \$2.6 million in general fund debt; therefore we shouldn't move forward now with a new expansion project based on the same overly optimistic economic forecast."

Commissioners Shoemaker and Rothschild both sited concerns with spending \$74 million of taxpayer money on the project. Commissioner Rothschild expressed concern that "taking free money from the federal government may seem rational, but it doesn't make it right... taking this money leads our country one step closer to national bankruptcy"

Commissioners Howard and Roush pointed out that the federal money comes directly from airport fees paid by air travelers and specifically designed to fund projects such as these.

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