

# Science & Digital Briefs

By [Highway Shopper](#) Editor Dave Bunting

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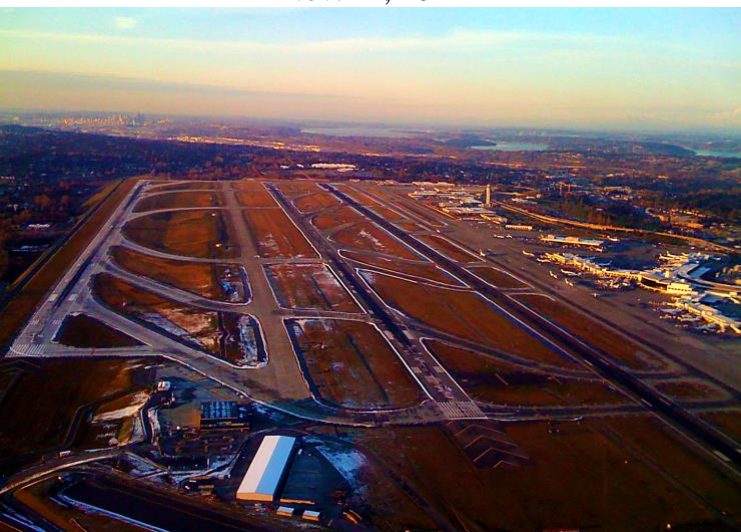


Image: [airports-worldwide.com](#)

By 2040, Western Washington will need another large airport. State officials are studying where to locate one that covers more acres than Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

Without it, air travel will snarl and air cargo shipments stall as the region's projected population growth pushes far beyond the capacity of Sea-Tac and Everett's Paine Field.

The problem is nobody wants a major airport anywhere near their backyard.

A state commission last month narrowed the search to a shortlist of three locations in rural Pierce and Thurston counties, and by June 15 must settle on a single site that it will recommend to the Legislature.

In a confusing wrinkle, the state Department of Transportation is also still assessing a fourth site. Just west of Enumclaw in Southeast King County, this location would eat up significant green space halfway between Seattle and Mount Rainier.

Public opposition to all the proposed sites from residents, elected officials and tribal leaders was immediate and virtually unanimous.

Jeremy Foust, whose dairy goat farm sits in the middle of one of two 6-mile-wide sites in Pierce County, would lose it all if the airport is built there. The state would likely push to buy out landowners to site an airport, which under state law is an "essential public facility."

"This area is growing. They'll need a second airport somewhere," Foust said. "So it's gonna happen in someone's backyard."

"But it's not just your backyard. It's your whole yard. And your house," he added. "My livelihood, yeah, it would cease to exist."

Pierce County Executive Bruce Dammeier said a major airport at either of the locations under his management "would irreparably harm the character of rural Pierce County."

"We have infrastructure concerns, we have dramatic environmental concerns," Dammeier declared.

Willie Frank III, chair of the Nisqually Indian Tribe, in a letter to the state Department of Transportation, wrote that the proposed sites are "simply not acceptable" because of the potential impact on the watershed.

Despite the opposition, the work of selecting an airport site will proceed.

Years of wrangling are ahead before the project can move forward. Lawsuits that will stall decisions are inevitable.

Already evident is a radical stance within the environmental movement that argues the flying we do today should be severely curtailed to curb greenhouse gas emissions and so opposes building new airports.

From [The Seattle Times](#), Nov 14, 2022

By Dominic Gates