

SIERRA CLUB ATLANTIC CHAPTER

1. Proposed resolution

The Executive Committee of the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club endorses the petition of the Lower Hudson Group in opposition to the proposed privatization and consequent expansion of Westchester Airport.

We urge the New York City Council, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to join in opposing the privatization and expansion of Westchester Airport.

2. Background

This proposal would have significant adverse environmental impacts, which would to a great extent be subsidized with public funds. Some airport runoff flows into the Kensico Reservoir, which supplies 90% of the water in New York City. The increase in contamination from airport expansion would directly jeopardize the drinking water of about 9 million people. If the proposal passes, a filtration plant to deal with Kensico Reservoir contamination could cost over \$12 billion.

After Stewart Airport in Newburgh, NY, was privatized in 1999, carcinogenic PFOS was discovered in the City of Newburgh's water supply, making it unsafe to drink. The PFOS was traced back to stormwater from the airport, which was then declared a Superfund site.

Privatization will mean far less public oversight of the airport and encourage the county to operate the facility for maximum profit, which would likely be at the expense of the community.

The petition is available at <https://www.change.org/p/westchester-board-of-legislators-stop-privatization-of-westchester-county-airport>.

3. Arguments

Pro: This expansion proposal exists solely for the profit of a few people at the expense of the health and pocketbooks of the local and regional population.

Con: None.

4. Prior Club policy: Chapter policy is to limit passenger flights at the airport. In addition, the Sierra Club has traditionally opposed any project that has an adverse environmental effect, in this case on water contamination, noise, and air pollution from a greatly increased amount of flights and vehicle traffic.

5. Financial implications: None

6. Contact person

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7. Next steps

- Continue to lobby Westchester Board of Legislators with umbrella group Citizens for a Responsible County Airport against Westchester Airport privatization
- Lobby NY City Councilmembers to oppose this airport expansion
- Partner with the Chapter airport committee
- Identify lead volunteers in NYC
- Create a Kensico Reservoir committee in NYC Group to align with Chapter Water Task Force
- Work on publicity citywide
- Have a public forum on NYC water quality; invite the press
- Find advocates in city government