GMPB Members and Staff: As part of Thursday’s GMPB committee meeting, the board will take up a discussion on proposed language and, some suggested edits from board members, to the multicounty planning policies within the Vision 2050 document. I regret that I am not able to attend due to travel, and would like to provide my support here, on behalf of the Port of Seattle, for the PSRC staff “proposed refinement” to changes suggested by Councilmember Buxton to policy recommendation T-31.

We appreciate the Councilmember proposing language for recommendation T-31 that acknowledges the need for improved coordination regionally as the demand for aviation services grows. The staff’s response, included in the “Revised Draft” column on page 65 of the agenda packet, does a good job of accommodating the spirit of the Councilmembers suggestions, and we support that version of the T-31 policy recommendation moving forward in the Vision 2050 document.

As the board considers this “proposed refinement” put forward by staff, I urge you to consider the importance of maintaining the term “existing” in the T-31 recommendation, as in: “ensure that the region can accommodate growth through maximizing existing regional aviation capacity.” We believe that this acknowledges the tremendous investment in existing airports throughout the region – Arlington, Auburn, Boeing Field, Paine, Renton and Sea-Tac – that is both public and private money and serves a range of regional aviation needs. We do not see the language as solely supporting or favoring Sea-Tac, especially with new service beginning this year at Paine Field. Further, this is consistent with language the Legislature adopted this year, in the legislation to convene a statewide aviation coordinating commission. That proposal directs the commission to consider upgrades at existing facilities, as it looks to the next commercial service facility that will serve statewide demand.

Thank you for your consideration.

-Peter Steinbrueck, Commissioner, Port of Seattle