

AOC Submission

Airline Operators' Committee Hong Kong
Submission to Legislative Council
Subcommittee to Follow Up Issues Relating to the Three-runway System at
the Hong Kong International Airport

The Airline Operators' Committee (AOC), an industry body representing 94 companies operating at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) including airlines, ground handling agents, catering companies, engineering and maintenance companies and security firms, supports the three-runway systems of HKIA.

HKIA is one of the fastest growing airports in the world. In 2015, it was the world's leading airport for international freight, third largest for international passenger traffic after Dubai and London in the world.

However, the existing two-runway airport is operating close to capacity. AOC fully supports the building of the third runway in order to maintain Hong Kong's status and competitive strength as a premier aviation hub.

We believe that Hong Kong's connectivity with the rest of the world is crucial in ensuring the city's longstanding position as an international centre of finance, trading, logistics, tourism and professional services.

Environmental Considerations

AOC welcomes the decision of the Environmental Protection Department to approve the Environmental Impact Assessment report and to issue an Environmental Permit (EP). Airlines are mindful of the impact the aviation industry has on the environment and have been doing a great deal to minimise its impact.

Home carriers of Hong Kong and many other airlines operating at HKIA have been making substantial investments in modern and environmentally friendly aircraft. Our members have also pro-actively worked together in making the airport greener, the replacement of GSE with LPG/electrical, the reduction of waste by recycling etc.

AOC acknowledges the importance of achieving a balance between the environmental considerations and economic benefits of developing a new runway. We will continue to work with the authorities on the mitigation measures.

Capacity saturation

The primary concern of not only AOC members but all who operate at the airport is to ensure a smooth and enjoyable passenger experience at HKIA. However, the current saturation of the two-runway system impinges tangibly upon the experiences of many passing through.

Within the terminals, limited space in the check-in areas, boarding gates and security check-points lead to long queues.

In addition, the increased frequency of Air Traffic Control-induced delays is a matter of great concern; it is already common for arrival flights to sit on the apron waiting for parking bays to become available.

As a consequence, arriving passengers encounter late delivery of bags whilst transiting passengers risk missed connections or must travel onwards without their luggage in some cases. With approximately 50% of all passengers transferring, this should be of great concern to all who wish to maintain Hong Kong's status as the primary hub airport of Asia, connecting passengers from all over the world.

Insufficient capacity and limited space would hinder the growth of our member airlines and potential carriers operating to and from HKIA, and also limit effective service recovery after major flight disruptions such as typhoons. Yet the perception that HKIA faces severe challenges during typhoon, lightning storm and other weather disruption overlooks the fact that everyday operations, in of themselves, represent a great challenge to all those working there. We must act now to alleviate this significant pressure.

Summary

AOC welcomes the authorities' various initiatives to increase the number of the landing/take-off slots during some peak hours, and to provide more parking bays through the midfield concourse that opened recently. However, these are just interim relief measures. The delays on an expansion of HKIA will cause damage to the customer experience it currently offers, and place increased stress on those that work on the frontline. The airport requires a third runway to maintain its reputation as both a passenger and cargo hub and to ensure long-lasting economic benefit to Hong Kong. In this regard, we fully support the three- runway system to be implemented as soon as possible.

AOC
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