

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 16, 2003

Secretary Donald Rumsfeld
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

We write regarding an important issue to the citizens of the state of Washington that affects air transportation in the Puget Sound region. We request an evaluation of the four Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) in that area issued after September 11, 2001.

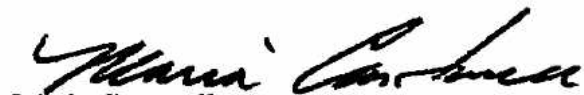
There are currently 14 national security-related TFRs throughout the country issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) at the request of the Department of Defense. Four of these are in Washington State's Puget Sound region. These TFRs cause operational, access and efficiency challenges for civilian pilots. For example, pilots can no longer use the Columbia River as a navigation reference without deviation. The restrictions impact the arrivals and departures into four airports in the region, and have closed a seaplane base. All of this has had a significant economic impact on aviation businesses.

Over the past five months, the Federal Aviation Administration, in cooperation with the Department of Defense, reviewed and eliminated three TFRs across the country, while maintaining appropriate security. Security must be paramount. We ask you to determine whether the TFRs in the Puget Sound region continue to advance our nation's security, or whether they should be modified or eliminated.

We understand the need to secure our airspace and our country, but ask you to revisit each of these TFRs. We appreciate your efforts to enhance our security, and thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Patty Murray
United States Senator


Maria Cantwell
United States Senator