

28 Senators Oppose Permit For Concorde

By Timothy S. Robinson

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Twenty-eight senators asked Transportation Secretary William T. Coleman Jr. yesterday to deny the British and French permission to land their Concorde supersonic jet transport in the United States until the plane "is shown to be in compliance with current environmental policy, programs and laws."

At the same time, a federal judge refused to stop Coleman from making his decision on whether the plane can land at Dulles International Airport, an action sought by the Fairfax and Loudoun County boards. Dulles airport is in both suburban Virginia counties.

The senators' letter, similar to one sent to Coleman three days earlier by 81 members of the House, criticized the SST for its noise, its effect on the atmosphere and its fuel consumption.

The senators said allowing the Concorde to land here is "not in the national interest and is directly in conflict with established environmental policy, programs and laws."

"It sounds like we're getting into a period of legal guerrilla warfare," a spokesman for British Aircraft Corporation, one of the joint builders of the Concorde, said yesterday.

In the suit brought by the Northern Virginia governments, U.S. District Judge Charles R. Richey said blocking Coleman's decision would be premature.

The suit claims that any decision made by Coleman would be illegal, because the Federal Aviation Administration has not issued final noise control regulations for supersonic jets as required by law.

Although refusing to block Coleman's decision, Richey made it clear that any decision by the Secretary could be set aside later if it was done illegally.

Federal government attorneys said Coleman's decision will be announced Feb. 4. The next hearing in the Fairfax-Loudoun suit is scheduled for Feb. 5.

The federal government

attorneys also told the judge that the Secretary's decision also must be sent to the Council on Environmental Quality, which will not act on it for another 30 days.

Coleman's decision will follow his personal review of testimony and other materials concerning the possible environmental effects of Concorde flights on the U.S.

The county governments that filed yesterday's suit said Coleman cannot properly make such a decision until he takes the final noise-control standards into consideration.

The standards, required under the Noise Control Act, have been proposed and publicly discussed, but their final adoption has been pending within the Federal Aviation Administration for eight months.

Justice Department attorneys said yesterday the noise control regulations are a separate issue, and their adoption is not required before Coleman's decision is announced.

Fairfax County Attorney Frederic Lee Ruck disagreed, saying the regulations should be finally adopted before any decision is announced.

In the suit, Ruck cited portions of an environmental impact statement that said the noise from the Concorde will disrupt such activities as listening to the radio or watching television, and that vibrations from the plane will cause "the rattling . . . of household goods such as dishes, pictures and lamps."

The senators, in a letter circulated by the offices of Sen. Gaylord Nelson (D-Wis.) and Birch Bayh (D-Ind.) also mentioned an "immediate adverse environmental noise impact" from the Concorde.

The senators said the plane will hurt the nation's air quality and could deteriorate the ozone layer that covers the earth, resulting in possible additional cases of skin cancer.

In addition, "the Concorde is highly fuel inefficient," the letter said.