

Construction Will Replace Existing Structure Built 45+ Years Ago for Smaller Airport



Islip, NY— On Monday, U.S. Congressman Steve Israel (D-NY) and Islip Town Supervisor Phil Nolan announced construction plans for a new air traffic control tower to meet the long-term safety needs of Long Island MacArthur Airport (LIMA). Israel and Nolan were joined by LIMA Aviation Commissioner Teresa Rizzuto and members of the Islip Town Council as they announced construction details of a new air traffic control tower that will replace the existing structure which was built over 45 years ago for a much smaller airport.

“An outdated air traffic control tower is one air traffic delay we cannot afford,” said Israel. “The new air traffic control tower will match the other improvements, expansions and modernizations that MacArthur Airport has undergone. Since the air traffic control tower was built in 1962, MacArthur Airport’s terminal space has grown five times larger. The problem is that as the terminal got bigger, the air traffic control tower was stuck in the past. Thankfully, we don’t use technology from four decades ago to screen luggage; we shouldn’t use a tower constructed decades ago for a much smaller airport to control planes. Furthermore, the occupational safety of air traffic controllers is critical as they ensure the safety of the over 2 million passengers that travel through MacArthur Airport each year.”

“Long Island MacArthur Airport is now the fastest growing mid-size airport in the United States, and as such, a state-of-the-art control tower is as essential as a well-paved runway,” said Nolan. “The Town of Islip is thankful for Congressman Israel’s support in securing more than \$16 million to build the tower, as well as funds announced last week to modernize the airport’s runway. With these improvements, MacArthur will be well-prepared to meet the future needs of Long Island travelers.”

Israel and Nolan have long been concerned with the safety concerns presented by the condition and height of MacArthur Airport’s tower. When the tower was first constructed in the 1960s, the airport’s terminal space was only 45,000 square feet. Now, the airport has over 235,000 square feet of terminal space and serves over 2.3 million travelers annually. It is estimated that the tower must be at least fifty feet taller to maximize visibility.

The projected total cost of the project is \$25.2 million and a \$16.412 million construction contract was awarded earlier this year. These new federal funds will allow for construction of an 8,000 square-foot state-of-the-art tower. The new tower will rise 150 feet high with a 129-foot cab (for air traffic controllers to view the field). The tower is expected to be constructed by November 2009 and fully operational by June 2010.

Last week, Israel announced \$1.3 million in new federal funds to modernize the runway at Long Island MacArthur Airport to address safety concerns. Israel, along with Islip Town Supervisor Phil Nolan, has been fighting to secure these federal funds to rehabilitate the runway at MacArthur Airport to ensure safe aircraft operations. Earlier this year, Israel led the fight to block a FAA plan to move critical air traffic control equipment from MacArthur Airport to Morristown, New Jersey.

Israel and Nolan were joined on Monday by members of the Islip Town Council and Air Traffic Controllers employed at LIMA.