



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

GENERAL COUNSEL

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Catherine A. McMullen, Esq.
Chief, Disclosure Unit
U.S. Office of Special Counsel
1730 M Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036-450

January 18, 2013

Dear Ms. McMullen:

I have enclosed a status update, prepared by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), on corrective actions relating to a whistleblower complaint (DI-11-0165) filed by Vincent Sudent, an air traffic controller at Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport. The Office of Special Counsel closed this complaint on May 8, 2012.

Please feel free to call Debra Rosen or me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Terence Carlson".

Terence Carlson
Acting Assistant General Counsel
for General Law

Enclosure



Federal Aviation Administration

Memorandum

Date: **JAN 14 2013**

To: Terence W. Carlson
Acting Assistant General Counsel for General Law, C-10

From:  H. Clayton Foushee, Director, Audit and Evaluation, AAE-001

Subject: Follow-up Status Report on Office of Special Counsel Case No. DI-11-0165 regarding Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport Wind Sensors and Standard Instrument Departure Corrective Actions

This is a follow-up status report concerning Allegations 2 and 3 described in the Office of Inspector General (OIG) report of investigation (ROI) dated August 26, 2011. Following the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) referral of case number DI-11-0165 dated February 28, 2011, and the OIG ROI, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) responded to the allegations and follow-up questions from the OSC. FAA's response included a commitment to providing Department officials with status updates regarding corrective actions. Previous updates were provided in January, April and July 2012. FAA is providing the following information to update you on the status of the corrective actions:

Allegation 2: *"The Automated Surface Observing System and Wind Measuring Equipment in Detroit continue to display significantly different wind measurements, resulting in an "unsafe and untenable situation for controllers and the flying public."*

Updated Response: As previously reported to the Department, on July 10, 2012, FAA designated the WME as the primary source for wind information, with the ASOS to remain as a back-up source. The wind sensors for the two systems are located at different points on the airport, geographically separated by (7024 feet). The complainant has reported discrepant readings with the ASOS (the secondary or back-up source) because both the WME and ASOS systems provide readings to the tower cab. We have been reviewing these discrepancies and provided our analyses to the facility manager who has shared the information with the complainant.

The FAA has continued to collect wind information from both wind sensor systems at Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW). As indicated in our January 9, 2012 update, FAA deployed a WME software update at DTW which is collecting historical wind information to support analysis when necessary. The software patch installed in the WME has produced less variation in wind direction and wind speed measurements when data from both systems are

compared. We are currently analyzing several periods during October/November 2012 when wind sensor outputs were reported to be different.

The whistleblower has previously expressed his belief the ASOS needs to be moved as it is sheltered from providing accurate wind readings, or that it needs to be taken out of service if it is not providing reliable wind information. We previously collaborated with the Department of Commerce's National Weather Service (NWS) specialists most familiar with the ASOS, resulting in the NWS replacing internal parts of the ASOS on multiple occasions (at our request) during 2011. The NWS has indicated that the ASOS is functioning properly, and FAA cannot authorize altering a system that belongs to the NWS. The FAA does not plan to analyze limiting/discontinuing (complainant suggestion) the access to ASOS wind information in the DTW tower.

The WME has now been the primary source of wind information since July 2012. Because our recent experience with both sensor systems indicates both systems are reliable and provide sufficient wind information necessary to safely conduct air traffic operations, our future analysis will focus on the primary wind sensor only. We have not yet seen one full year of seasonal weather since the WME was designated the primary sensor, so the FAA will compare data from the two sensors and associated analysis until July 2013; (this will complete one full year since the WME was re-designated the primary sensor).

Allegation 3: *"Air Traffic Controllers are unable to electronically issue Standard Instrument Departures to aircraft departing Detroit for several airports in Ohio, resulting in a "substantial and specific danger to public safety."*

Updated Response: Although the OIG was unable to substantiate this allegation, the Air Traffic Organization (ATO) feels that both safety and efficiency are enhanced by publishing standard instrument departures (SID) to airport locations that are frequent destinations. DTW worked with Cleveland Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZOB) on airspace and routes from DTW to the Ohio airports. ZOB and DTW agreed on April 23, 2012 to pursue three preferred routes (Columbus/Cleveland/Cincinnati) "branched off" the "Palace Five Departure" and "St. Clair Four Departure" (existing) SIDs. These SID changes were published on January 10, 2013. The FAA coordinated with primary (Part 121/135) operators on desired SIDs and routes from DTW to Columbus/Cleveland/Cincinnati prior to publication.

FAA concurs with OIG's prior conclusion that neither the SID to Ohio airports or wind sensor readings constitute a substantial or specific danger to public safety, but we are committed to the actions described here to improve the timely release of aircraft from DTW and raise the confidence of controllers who depend on wind systems for safety and efficiency.

Because of the timing of this update, we plan our next update in April 2013 to allow for implementation of the SID changes and further wind sensor monitoring. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Joseph Teixeira, Vice President of ATO Safety and Technical Training, at 202-267-3341.

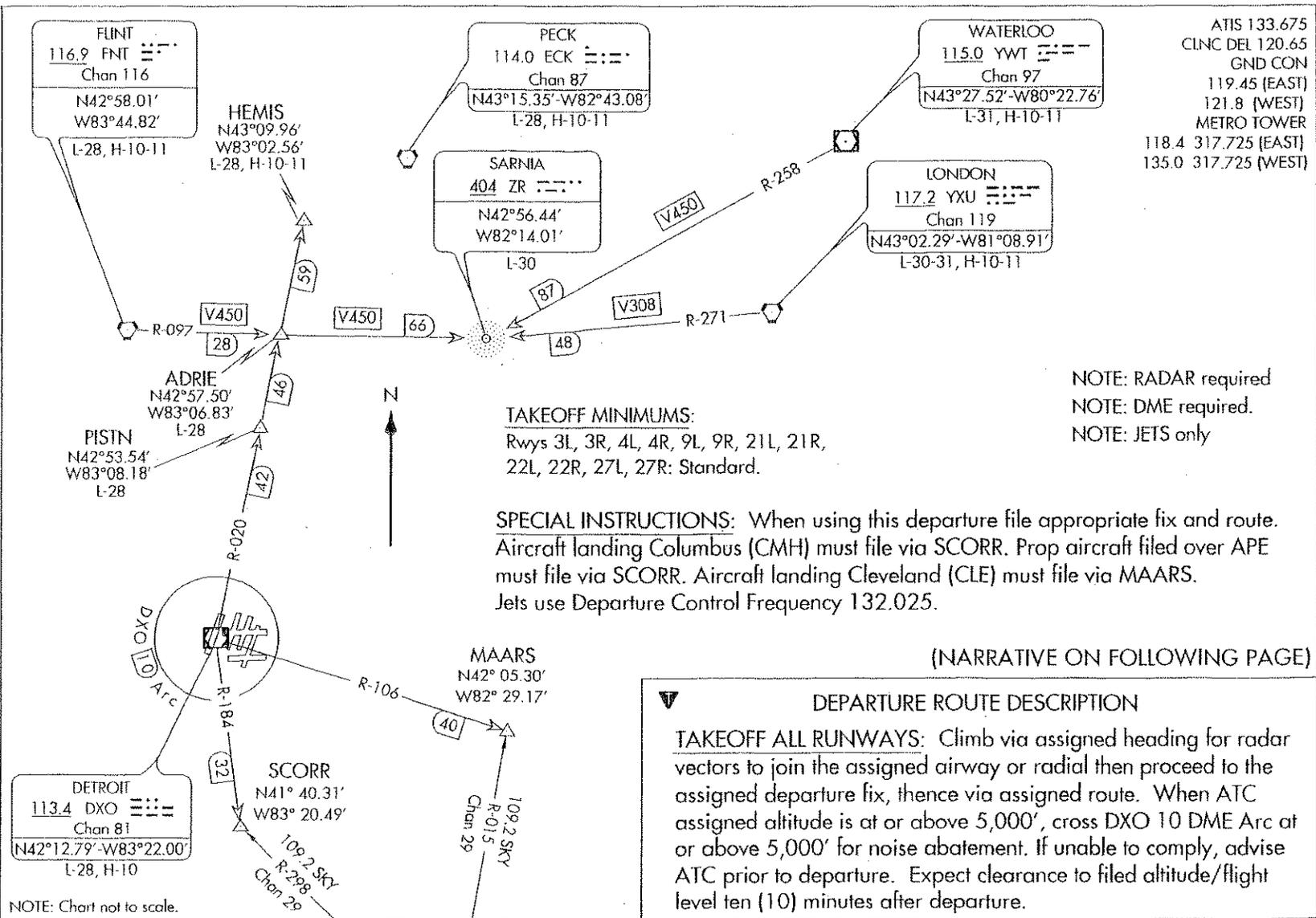
cc: Vice President, Safety and Technical Training
Vice President, Terminal Services
Chief Operating Officer

Atch: Two SIDs ("Palace Six Departure" & "St. Clair Five Departure"), dated Jan. 10, 2013

EC-1, 10 JAN 2013 to 07 FEB 2013

ST. CLAIR FIVE DEPARTURE
(STCLR5.DXO) 13010

DETROIT METROPOLITAN WAYNE COUNTY (DTW)
DETROIT, MICHIGAN



EC-1, 10 JAN 2013 to 07 FEB 2013

ST. CLAIR FIVE DEPARTURE
(STCLR5.DXO) 13010

SI-119 (FAA)

DETROIT METROPOLITAN WAYNE COUNTY (DTW)
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

ATIS 133.675
CLNC DEL 120.65
GND CON
119.45 (EAST)
121.8 (WEST)
METRO TOWER
118.4 317.725 (EAST)
135.0 317.725 (WEST)

(NARRATIVE ON FOLLOWING PAGE)

DEPARTURE ROUTE DESCRIPTION
TAKEOFF ALL RUNWAYS: Climb via assigned heading for radar vectors to join the assigned airway or radial then proceed to the assigned departure fix, thence via assigned route. When ATC assigned altitude is at or above 5,000', cross DXO 10 DME Arc at or above 5,000' for noise abatement. If unable to comply, advise ATC prior to departure. Expect clearance to filed altitude/flight level ten (10) minutes after departure.