



SANTA MONICA OBLIGATED BY GRANT ASSURANCES UNTIL 2023

News / Business aviation



In a December 4 decision on a Part 16 complaint filed by pro-airport interests for the **Santa Monica** (Calif.) Airport (SMO), the FAA determined that the city of Santa Monica is obligated by grant assurances until August 27, 2023. Essentially, this means that the city must comply with statutory and regulatory obligations in its running of SMO, according to visiting professor at UCLA and local pilot Lon Sobel.

He said, “Those obligations have an impact on things like landing fees and lease lengths. And it's likely that the city's landing fee hikes and short-term rentals violate those obligations. The Part 16 procedure that was used to get Friday's ruling is a procedure that can be used to attack landing fees, short-term rentals and other things the city has done, or might attempt to do in the future, to make the airport unworkable.”

The Part 16 complaint was filed July 2, 2014, by NBAA, AOPA, airport businesses, tenant and actor Harrison Ford, airport user Paramount Citrus and other parties seeking a clear decision on when the city's grant obligations expire. The city claimed an expiration date of June 29, 2014, and since then has raised landing fees significantly, applied these fees to all based tenants and shortened tenant rental terms, while moving forward with attempts to partially or fully close the airport. The city has 30 days to appeal the FAA's determination.

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