



International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
DISTRICT LODGE 947

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUBJECT: Long Beach City Council to be applauded for tabling proposed changes that will endanger the Airport while costing the tax payers.

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The Long Beach City Council has appropriately tabled a move by Police Chief Luna pending further investigation. The IAM Union applauds the Council for stopping the proposal for careful review.

The proposed reduction of training of the Airport police (SSOs') from 16 weeks down to a little more than a week would down grade the current SSOs' status as peace officers and remove their arrest powers, ultimately putting the safety of the public at risk and increasing the financial burden on the tax payer.

Richard Suarez, who represents the SSO police on behalf of the IAM Union said, "Long Beach Airport is like its own city where 3.5 million passengers and more than 50,000 tons of freight pass through annually before moving on to the next destination. When a crime is committed, if the law enforcement officers fail to act instantaneously to apprehend a criminal or question a witness, they lose the opportunity forever. This kind of policing requires an intimate knowledge of the inner workings and dynamics of the Airport. It is completely ineffective to pull any cop off the beat and expect the safety of the people of the Airport to be at the same level."

Chief Luna of the Long Beach Police Department is the spearhead of the changes. Under his proposal, the SSOs' will no longer be able to assist victims of crimes like rape, robbery, assault, or even assist when there is an active shooter. Instead, in their diminished role, laid out in Luna's plan, they would only be able to call 911 and helplessly wait for the arrival of dispatched police officers.

Representative Suarez went on, "The plan set forth by Chief Luna is preposterous, and replacing the SSOs' with Long Beach police is extremely expensive and dangerous. Rotating cops off the street that have no knowledge of the day to day workings of the Airport would greatly reduce the safety of not only the people at the Airport and the officers involved, but of the entire city by spreading our already thin police force even thinner."

Our City's significant investment in the tourism sector could be all wasted by mishandled or late police responses to major Airport incidents. It appears to be a power grab suspended by poor analysis.