

STATEMENT OF HON. CHARLES L. WELTNER, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Mr. WELTNER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am grateful for permission to appear before my colleagues today.

Mr. Chairman, I do not have a written statement and I will not consume a great deal of time. But there is a matter of continuing urgency that I should like to discuss.

Last year the chairman was good enough to hear from me on the question that I had raised pursuant to my bill, H.R. 696, concerning the difficulties that attend owners of houses in the proximity to airports.

I pointed out last year, Mr. Chairman, that the 5-year plan of the Federal Aviation Agency contemplates within that period of time a total of 4,858 separate projects concerning airports in this country.

Of course, aviation is a growing industry, and we must have bigger airports, and larger and wider and longer landing strips. That is fine. But the problem comes in the effect of building new aviation facilities near existing homes. And as the chairman and members are aware, the Federal Housing Administration has a policy of refusing to issue any kind of FHA insurance on homes which they determine to be in proximity to airports. This is not the same as the determination of homes within a safety zone. This could be homes anywhere from 1 mile or even 2 miles away from the end of a runway. The Federal Housing Administration will not issue insurance on those homes and consequently those homeowners find it extremely difficult to sell their houses. They are first damaged by the noise and the inconvenience, and secondly they are damaged by the total unavailability of FHA insurance in any amount, to any degree, on their homes. The Congress recognized last year, and in section 1113 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965 the Housing Administrator was required to undertake a study and to report back on what methods might be implemented to reduce loss and hardship to homeowners whose property is depreciated in value following construction of the airports in the vicinity of their home. That report was to be submitted within 1 year from the date of the enactment of the 1965 act, which was in August.

Now, then, I am advised, Mr. Chairman, that the Senate appropriated \$60,000 for that report, and that the matter was totally eliminated in conference. Consequently there was no special appropriation for that study. I am further advised that the Housing Administrator is not at the present time conducting any kind of study with regard to this problem.

I would like to offer two things at this point. One is a letter which I found to be rather compelling from one of my constituents, and I would like to offer that for submission in the record.

My constituent lives in 1 of the 484 houses, in my district, which are physically between 2 runways. She did not build the house between the runways; the Federal Aviation Agency and the Atlanta Airport built those runways on either side of her house. This letter says that "this area is a slum now and we are trying to get urban renewal interested. About 50 houses are lived in by the owners. About 50 are rented and now mostly torn down; 25 are vacant. One